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FROM FETTERS TO FREEDOM

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

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# FROM FETTERS TO FREEDOM

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF IRISH FAITH

BY THE  
REV. ROBERT KANE, S.J.

AUTHOR OF 'THE SERMON OF THE SEA'

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
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TO  
THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF IRELAND

*To those who dwell amid the smiles and tears of Erin's sky, on this hallowed soil of St. Patrick's Heritage, and to those who from afar turn back at times, in wistful thought and shadowed tenderness, to revisit, at least in dream, the revered and beloved home of their forefathers and of their Faith, this Book is lovingly Dedicated by the Author,*

ROBERT KANE, S.J.

WHIT SUNDAY, 1914.



## PREFACE

THE publication of this Volume, and the choice of most of the Discourses which it contains, are the fulfilment of a wish expressed by one of my former Superiors who has since then passed away. His wish has been endorsed and emphasised by my present Provincial.

These Discourses are broadly illustrative of the emerging of Catholic Ireland from the serfdom of the Penal Laws unto civil, social, and religious liberty. This has suggested the title of the Volume.

ROBERT KANE, S.J.

MILLTOWN PARK,  
DUBLIN



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# FROM FETTERS TO FREEDOM

## CHAPTER I

### A GREAT SON AND SHEPHERD OF MEATH<sup>1</sup>

*Now O son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the House of Israel. Therefore thou shalt hear the word from My mouth, and shalt tell it them from Me.*—Ezekiel, iii. 17.

BESIDE the grave, thought and silence meet. Death speaks ; Life listens. Time is hushed in the presence of Eternity, and within the awe-struck souls that mourn, re-echoes, with unutterable eloquence, the lesson of lips that are dumb.

Much more, when it is a great man that is gone, does the stillness of the tomb reverberate with truths that are solemn, and the living pause to hearken to the dead.

But if that great man has been no lonely scholar, no singer of sweet words, no mere dreamer of fair forms of art, no mere patient talent turned to heal the sick or help the sad, but a soldier spirit, around whose figure swayed the fiercest crisis of the war

<sup>1</sup> Funeral Oration, on the occasion of the ' Month's Mind,' of the Most Reverend Doctor Nulty, late Bishop of Meath, preached in the Cathedral, Mullingar, January 25, 1899.

## 2 A GREAT SON AND SHEPHERD OF MEATH

between dominant forces of his day, interest grows, thought becomes intense, and meditation more profound.

Yet, still again, if the martial character that sleeps its last sleep has stood at a turning-point in human history ; if it has been an actual link between eras that are opposed ; if it has assisted at the death of an old world and at the birth of a new ;—then the solemnity of a buried past, and the suspense of an untried future, startle the soul into wonder at what has left us, and into awe at what is to come.

There is silence to the clamour of passing impressions, silence to the praise that was evanescent, silence to the blame that was but the breath of a transient storm ; for these are hushed with the man that is dead.

But there is thought of the memory that lives ; thought of the great character whose virtues only shine more brightly through the impartial gloom of the grave ; thought of noble aims, many attempted, some achieved, all of which have struck robust root into willing soil ; thought of benevolent works which yield perennial fruit even though the hand that planted them has crumbled into clay ; thought of the chivalrous friendships whose love is still warm, even though the heart that kindled them is now cold.

Dr. Nulty was born under the shadow of penal law ; he lived to see a Tory Parliament offer to Ireland a first measure of self-rule. He was born under the ban of bigotry ; he lived to see Cardinals recognised by the throne. As a boy he learned his lessons at a hedge school ; as a bishop he deliberated on the framing of a Catholic University, when it was but a

matter of months. As a youth he tilled his father's farm when his landlord held power from the law of lawless extermination; as an old man he beheld the tenant's toil and thrift secure. His life began with fetters upon his faith; with prison bars across his mind, with prison walls around his industry, with a political stigma upon his religion, and a social stain upon his blood; his life ended with his faith free, education open, wealth and honour within the grasp of any Catholic Kelt. In all this he was no bystander, but a workman; no camp-follower, but a soldier.

Bear with me, then, while I attempt, even though it be feebly and falteringly, to lift the memory of Dr. Nulty above the dust of dead conflict, beyond the spray of spent storm, and in the calm atmosphere of eternal truth, from the pinnacle of principles that are divine, in reverent sorrow for his vanished presence, yet with sure trust in his present prayer, try to read aright the lesson of his life.

Born at Fennor, near Oldcastle, on July 7, 1818, of Francis Nulty and Bridget Tuite, Thomas Nulty was baptized on the following day in the old parish chapel. Son of the soil of Meath, for his parents were of the farming class, he never forgot his early affection for the green fields, nor ever faltered in his early allegiance to the noble service of the plough. Listen to the enthusiastic words he wrote, even when the warmth of his appreciations had been chilled by age, and his admiration dulled by disappointment. In defence of the old school of his boyhood, the Gilson Endowment, founded by a poor unlettered Oldcastle man who had grown rich in London, Dr. Nulty wrote: 'The purest, the holiest, and the most innocent of

#### 4 A GREAT SON AND SHEPHERD OF MEATH

society, in this country at least, certainly belong to the class of small farmers. They are high enough in the social scale to be above the temptation of extreme want ; and they are below the reach of the seductive and demoralising influence of great wealth. They are, as a rule, laborious, industrious, and, at the same time, frugal and temperate.'

He learned Classics from a teacher of the neighbourhood. I quote his own recollection of it : ' In the days of my boyhood, a hedge school was the only source of intellectual enlightenment and culture at all accessible to any Catholic. The hedge school was conducted in a mud cabin, which was heated by a turf fire created by the joint contributions of sods of turf, which the pupils carried with them under their arms day after day to the school.'

He was prepared for his first communion by the saintly Parish Priest of Oldcastle, Father Leonard. This circumstance, no doubt, prepared the innocent heart of the boy to listen eagerly to a strange, sweet call : ' Bend low thine ear and listen, for the King hath chosen thee ' ; and to answer, ' Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' Then ' the Spirit, breathing as it listeth,' breathed upon him, and within his soul was born the first fresh, fragrant hope of the priesthood.

He went to Navan Seminary, and in his twenty-first year entered the hallowed walls of the greatest college of its kind in modern Europe—magnificent Maynooth. There he achieved such success as not only to become a Dunboyne Student, but so to outstrip all competitors as to gain what is technically known as a ' Solus '—that is to say, that amongst the brilliant and the

studious he was so far first as to be not only foremost, but in honour quite alone.

Ordained Priest at Pentecost, 1846, Father Nulty left Maynooth in 1847, and was appointed for the time Professor in Saint Finian's, Navan. In April 1848, after three weeks spent in assisting a dying Priest—Father Rickard of Athboy—Father Nulty received from his Bishop, Dr. Cantwell, his first permanent appointment as Curate at Trim, where he remained for four years. He was then appointed Bishop's Curate at Mullingar, in which office he laboured for another four years ; until in 1856 he was appointed President of Saint Mary's, Mullingar, where he at the same time taught Classics.

In 1863 he was appointed Parish Priest of his beloved Trim, Vicar Forane and Master of Conferences of that Deanery. It is to the kindness and research of his actual successor in the Parish of Trim that I owe the materials which have made me acquainted with most of the details of Dr. Nulty's life.

Hitherto we have followed only a record of simple days, the plain tale of uneventful years, during which the son of man was being silently prepared for the heroism of the watchman. It was at Trim that Father Nulty first appeared in history.

He stood by the cholera grave alone. In 1847 famine brought to our poor country, already exhausted by the rapine of her oppressor, and feebly writhing under his iron heel, its own agonising struggles, its weird horror, its darkness, its despair, its death. Shrunken shapes tottered about or crept near where there was hope of food ; living skeletons sank in silent corners ; the haggard features of the hungry, their

## 6 A GREAT SON AND SHEPHERD OF MEATH

corpse-like cheek and bloodless lip ; the staring eyeballs of the starving ; the wild wail of want or weak moan of pain ;—these filled the gloom of that despair through which gaunt shadows stalked like spectres, or thin figures flitted like the phantoms of a sick dream.

Famine was followed by her twin-sister Pestilence, whose breath poisoned the homes haunted by starvation, and was blown about into the hut of the poor and the home of the wealthy, the cabin of the toiler and the castle of the lord. The nation was unnerved. What wonder that terror should paralyse even the throb of affection ; that the child should fly from the touch of its father's typhus, or that, when her baby had sickened, the mother should stagger back away from the cholera shed. But who should bring comfort and whisper a blessing, in the midst of the fright and infection, into the ear of the dying ? or who should pray, as he mourned alone, over the dead ? Who, if it was not the Priest ? Father Nulty did his duty. Often and often, alone with the pestilence, he sent the souls of the poor to God. Eleven interments a day was his average, and often he stood by the cholera grave alone.

In 1864 another and a nobler call came. ' Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was.' The call was the vocation of the Spirit to the dignity and the danger of the Pastoral Staff. ' Now, O son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the House of Israel. Therefore, thou shalt hear the word from My mouth, and shalt tell it them from Me.'

Dr. Cantwell had asked for a coadjutor, and in the election which took place, Father Nulty was declared *dignissimus*, Dr. M'Cabe, afterwards Bishop of Ardagh,

being *dignior*, and the celebrated Dr. O'Hanlon of Maynooth *dignus*.

The choice of the Diocese being confirmed by Rome, Dr. Nulty was consecrated Bishop of Centuria, by Dr. Dixon, the Primate of Armagh, assisted by Dr. Kelly of Derry, and Dr. Kilduff of Ardagh. Dr. M'Hale and Dr. Cullen were present.

Two years later, on the death of Dr. Cantwell, Dr. Nulty succeeded to the throne of Meath.

With what humility the great Bishop undertook his divine task is evident from his own words. In his pastoral letter, on the occasion of his first visitation, he wrote : ' The nearer we approach our sacred duties, the more conscious do we become of our own infirmity, the more does our diffidence in ourselves deepen. We had always a strong conviction of our utter unworthiness for the Pastoral charge ; and now that we find ourselves confronted with its obligations and its duties, we feel that conviction still stronger. We tremble, therefore, at the awful dignity, but we cannot now shrink from the task.'

We learn also from himself with what reverence and affection he cherished the sacred and beloved bond by which his very soul was wedded to his Church of Meath. He continues : ' A high and holy relationship, surrounded by the most tender associations, has now sprung up between us. Our most sacred and eternal interests are now inseparably intertwined. We are united by bonds which death alone can sever.'

Then follows a plea for the affection of his people : ' It is likely that you will extend to us some share of that affectionate attachment and esteem which the Irish people never withheld from their Pastors, and

## 8 A GREAT SON AND SHEPHERD OF MEATH

which rose in warmth and intensity with their ascending dignity in the Priesthood.' In the exercise of his Pastoral office, Dr. Nulty was always mindful of its meaning. 'Every high priest, being lifted up from amongst men, is set in those things that appertain unto God.'

Therefore did he put before himself, in the first place, the fulfilment of the apostolic monition, 'Look to thyself, and to teaching.' He was emphatically a man of prayer and study. Every morning he rose in winter at six o'clock; in summer at half-past five. All the intervening time he gave up to meditation and preparation for Holy Mass, which he celebrated at eight o'clock. All his days were lived in an atmosphere of Faith; and the very mainspring of his life was the living sense of an unseen Presence, and the power of a motive that was divine. His intellectual work was gigantic. From childhood to death he was a student. Theology—dogmatic and moral—Holy Scripture, and Canon Law, were the daily bread of his thought. The high mental standard which he followed he put before his Priests. I have had before me cases which he set for the regular and frequent conferences of his clergy. Their matter is that of a theologian, widely and deeply read; their shape shows the hand of a master. On these cases he required papers written by every single Priest of his Diocese, from the youngest Curate to the most venerable Parish Priest. His power of keen, close, and sustained reasoning was proved in many of his writings. I instance only his letter to Lord Hartington, on matters connected with certain evictions, and his letter to Mr. Sexton, M.P., on the Gilson School. These are masterpieces of forensic logic and of judicial



grasp. He was also much attracted by physical science ; and his public lectures on subjects of the kind showed the clearness and the research of a competent professor.

Speaking of his mental toil, I cannot omit one characteristic incident. In 1878 he lost the sight of one eye, mainly the result, in the opinion of Sir Dominick Corrigan and of Mr. Fitzgerald, of over-study. After a few weeks spent in Dublin under treatment, the fearless and indefatigable student went back to his books. When there was good work that he could do, it mattered little to him what personal risk he ran.

Prayerful and studious, Dr. Nulty had much of the endearing simplicity of a Patriarch. In his generous and thoughtful hospitality he made even strangers feel at once at home. He was approachable. Saint Augustine, in his 'Book of Confessions,' tells us how his father in the faith, the great Saint Ambrose, could be visited even unannounced. Often, then, when the young Augustine sought the presence of the venerable Bishop, he found the latter quite absorbed in the book he was reading. Thereupon Augustine, after that he had gazed awhile upon the saintly student, silently and reverently withdrew. Dr. Nulty was fond of children and of their sports. One of the brightest pleasures of the little ones at their merry gatherings was to see the real delight with which the grand old Bishop enjoyed their fun and frolic.

If we would hear the full echoes of all that was sweetest and most sacred in Dr. Nulty's heart, we have but to touch one master-chord. We know what is in a Priest's heart when we hear the tender tones

and endearing affection of his yearning prayer for the prodigal's return. Listen to the kind old Father's words in his Pastoral for Lent, 1870: 'A Bishop cannot help feeling for poor sinners, just as a mother feels for the poor outcast, who has proved himself the worst, the most wretched, and the most unfortunate of her children.'

One word more, in our study of the personal character of this great Bishop, about his views on practical affairs. Utterly free from greed of 'filthy lucre,' he insisted absolutely upon whatever moneys he or his clergy had, above the means of their befitting support, being given to good works; and, on the other hand, he urged that moneys contributed for good works should be safeguarded by legal sanction, and under such legal conditions as must insure the wishes of the donors being not only carried out, but carried out openly and under the public gaze.

Again, he rightly protested, and particularly in his Pastoral on the reopening of Saint Mary's Shrine at Trim, that it is a violation of the right order of charity, to send rich alms away to rich places when real needs at home are left unsupplied. He mentions with legitimate pride that Meath had subscribed more than any other diocese to All Hallows' and to the Catholic University; but he adds that this would have been better done if first the children of Meath were given some chance of education, its churches built, and its starving poor fed. Yet while the Bishop strove to build up the ruins of the present, he could not forbear a sigh for the glories of the past. In his Pastoral on the opening of Saint Mary's Shrine at Trim, he wrote: 'It is impossible for anyone whose

mind attentively considers the reminiscences of the past, at the same time that his eye is ranging over the broken arches, the dismantled fortresses, tottering towers, and ruined abbeys of the present, not to lapse into a dreamy unconsciousness, in which he will find it difficult to realise whether he is in the midst of a vast city of the dead or in a quiet, silent, sepulchre-like old town still inhabited by the living.'

Dr. Nulty was in many ways a Prince of Peace. I will recall only one scene, in which the world beheld him act as true Shepherd of his people.

In great social movements amongst men there are always, and in every party, to be found turbulent and undisciplined spirits, who, by imprudence in utterance or by excess in action, bring discredit upon the standard that they follow, and injure the cause they seek to serve. To a stranger who, from afar, watched the conflict between landlord and tenant, one plain fact appeared. Not the most irreconcilable Conservative would deny that the hands of some landlords were soiled with plunder and reddened with extermination, that they pushed their legal right to ruthless wrong; while the most advanced Radical would admit that, in the delirium of agitation, some deeds of shame and sin were done.

Now, all the traditions of Dr. Nulty's blood, the beloved memories of his home among the fields, the association of the pastures where he loitered or of the fallow-land where he toiled, the sympathies of his Priesthood that drew his heart down to the poor, the zeal of his Pastoral soul that lifted him up to resist oppression,—all these won his enthusiastic love and his chivalrous championship for the tillers of the

soil. Thus he is known to history as a fearless defender of the tenant's claim. He is not known as a fearless defender of the landlord's life.

Nowhere in Ireland did Ribbonism take such root as in the Diocese of Meath, which includes the King's County, Meath, and West Meath. Nowhere were lips more tightly sealed with the secrecy of the tomb; nowhere were hands more deadly or hearts more defiant with the audacity of despair.

As Bishop, Dr. Nulty wiped away the crimson stain which for so long had darkened one district of his diocese. As Priest he had laboured with a zeal, that would bear no restraint or brook no denial, to reconcile the exasperated victims of enormous clearances to the forgiving love of Christ. In his letter to Lord Hartington he paints a pathetic picture of the difficulties he met with in his apostleship of peace.

Can you realise, brethren, what it was? The man had seen a crowbar break the roof where he was born. The walls endeared to him by his father's memory were shattered—left to shelter the nettle and to crumble with the rain. Pools of water stagnate on the spot where he had learned his prayers at his mother's knee; and the long green grass now grows on the hearthstone. This, not because he would not pay the rent, but because men must make room for the silence of the meadow, and children be exterminated to give place to cattle. Nay, he had seen his sons and daughters die of want or drift into exile. The wife of his heart had faded too, and with her life faded the last smile of the last one that loved him. Is it strange that the man's terrible grief, soured by his sense of injustice, should revolt into a madness of

anger, and, with the cold method of implacable hatred, ponder over plans of wild revenge? How easily! He knows the turning of the road, just where the thicket stands. But the Priest came. As Father Nulty's tears fell like soft dew upon his sorrow, as the great heart of his greatest friend touched his own, the soul of his 'Soggarth aroon' conquered the soul of the sinner, and, with bowed-down head, his broken heart prayed with the prayer of the Priest: 'Our Father who art in heaven. Thy will be done. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.'

Contemplate that majestic figure! You remember how, during one of the late Egyptian wars, an heroic Priest rushed between the fire of two British regiments, which in the smoke and gloom had mistaken each other for the enemy, and thus, at peril of his life, saved brothers from their brothers' death. Such, and nobler still, was the figure of Dr. Nulty as he stood between the oppressor and the assassin. 'Stand back!' he cried to the tyrannous landlord; and to the maddened murderer, 'Hold!'

Nay! nay! it was not the baton nor the bayonet that brought the balm of forgiveness, or won the triumph of the law of love. It was the Priest. Yea! even though you be an alien to his Faith and a stranger to his people, Protestant or Saxon, yet kneel there by that grave, and thank God for your life that was saved by the Christian zeal of Dr. Nulty. What the power of England could not do, he did. He banished from Meath the 'wild justice of revenge.'

Prince of Peace, yet Shepherd of his people,

Dr. Nulty lived to learn the meaning of the patience of a Martyr.

In his Pastoral on the reopening of Saint Mary's Shrine, he spoke much of Dr. Walsh, the last Bishop who lived at Trim before himself. Three hundred years ago, Dr. Walsh, another Athanasius, champion of the Irish Church against Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, had been thrown into a dungeon in Dublin Castle, where for thirteen years he never saw the light of day, and whence he only escaped, maimed with wounds worn into his flesh by his fetters, to die in Spain an exile. Again, writing from 'outside the Flaminian Gate, Rome,' near the dungeon where Saint Paul had wept over his bitterest grief, the falling away of many Churches that he had founded, Dr. Nulty exclaims, in humble wonder, 'Where Saint Paul was despised we ourselves are honoured!' Stay! great Bishop, stay! Thy day shall come.

Brethren, contrast two days in Trim. The first in 1852, when the poor people gave to Father Nulty a keepsake, a token of their tender gratitude, a gold watch and chain. That watch he loved while he lived, and by his Will gave it back as an heirloom to his beloved Trim.

The second day was in 1892. Oh! the pain of it! Was it a dream?

When, upon Alpine heights, the snow is fresh and soft and full, a shudder will create an avalanche. When the air is charged with electric force, a spark will bring the thunderbolt. So, too, amongst men, most of all amongst men who have the quick impulse and hot blood of the Kelt, when a keen crisis comes, interest turns to fever, and, as thought becomes

intense, the expression of it dashes forward into inevitable extravagance, and action bursts into almost inevitable extreme. So was it then at Trim.

Brethren, I hold no brief for the defence. Much less have I commission, by aggressive thrust, to reopen wounds almost, if not already, healed.

I offer no apology, I make no attack. The memory of Dr. Nulty is above both. Mark well, and jealously watch, how I open no question and touch no topic which might intrude, with jar or discord, upon the silent reverence of any man for the great Bishop who is dead. But I may, with fearless trust, appeal from your convictions, be they what they may, to your sympathy for a great sorrow; and I may, with great earnestness, show the sympathy which your Shepherd felt for every member of his flock.

Ah! look with pity on the pain of a venerable and Holy Bishop, who, when accused of most grave fault, could not reply. When his words were misunderstood, he durst not speak. Legal technicalities sealed his lips in Court. Outside the Court, it were Contempt to answer. Any subsequent answer would have been taken to interfere with the freedom of the coming election.

For three long months he had to wait with folded arms, while the English and Protestant Press shot their envenomed shafts against him and his Office from every corner of the world, until at last his reply came. But it came too late. Men's minds were made up; they would not listen more. Absolutely convinced of the correctness of his own conclusions, and fixedly resolute in what he understood to be his conscientious duty, Dr. Nulty suffered and was silent.

You know how the whole world looks on, with indignant horror, while France condemns a soldier who, be he false to the honour of his sword or faithful, be he Jew or be he Gentile, be he sinner or be he saint, is sentenced on unseen proof, and thus had no fair play. Nay! no miscreant, accused of evident shame or open murder, but has fair trial and actual power of reply. A great Bishop, whether by legal law or luckless chance, not by Irish or English honour, was condemned unheard. 'It was the bitterest sorrow of my life,' he said. But he bore it with the patience of a martyr.

Now, think of his broad sympathy for you. Dr. Nulty realised thoroughly that men may be most sincere even when most mistaken; and in his most vehement censure of principles which he considered false, he did not condemn the persons whom he loved. In that very Pastoral so much assailed, he speaks of 'the upright and patriotic Irishmen, and the chaste and virtuous Irishwomen who strove for the ascendancy of the party to which he was opposed.' We have read in history how brave men often learned in battle to admire the genius and the valour of their foes; and how, when the roar of war had died away, and its fierce work was done, the hands of conquered and of conqueror, even while their wounds still wept, were clasped in chivalrous honour. So, too, the tears that fall upon a tomb may soften the gleam in eyes of anger, the silence of an open grave may stop the stormy word, its awfulness may abash the cavil of the critic, and the petty ties which held men apart may be snapped by a bond that is stronger, when in the presence of Death the cords



of human nature have drawn the hearts of the living together.

Oh ! great soul that art gone ! Thou that hearest still, even though thy mortal ear be dull ! entwine the tendrils of thy memory round the hearts of thy countrymen, and do in death a work more mighty than all thy life, as thou shalt bind them closer and closer with happy, hallowed chain into one beloved brotherhood of Christian Keltic love.

In 1889 Dr. Nulty celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his Episcopal Consecration ; in 1896, the Golden Jubilee of his Priesthood. On December 21 last, the feast of his own Saint Thomas, he said Mass for the last time. On the octave of Saint Thomas his remains lay before the altar of his cathedral. He slept in Christ on Christmas Eve. His Will carried out the teaching of his life : that the money of the Churchman belongs to God. He left £19,000, contributed by himself and his priests, for a new Diocesan Seminary ; £3000 to the Loreto School at Navan, £2000 to the Orphanage of the Sisters of Mercy, his books to his seminary, and the proceeds of his personal effects to the fund for Curates disabled by ill-health.

Thus he is gone from amongst us, a great mind, a saintly soul, a character sincere, fearless, resolute, yet withal great-hearted as a Patriarch and simple as a child. Had he no fault ? Hush ! The grave is closed. Fret not the slumber of the saintly dead, nor mock the living tears that mourn. Hush ! Wait ! When the Century, the first faint flutter of whose advancing tide already flings its spray about our pilgrim feet, shall have receded to the bosom of the Eternal Sea, the calm historian will pause to look

across the shallow sands or petty pools where small men lived their little lives, and gaze, with reverence, and with sympathy, upon the majestic figure of the great Bishop of Meath.

Most Reverend Lords, may I presume to point the moral of Dr. Nulty's life ?

Your Office is divine. You hold no warrant from the Crown, nor does your power hang upon a vote. Your Church has not been built by Act of Parliament. It is not from the Privy Council that you learn the dogmas which you teach ; neither have you to give account of your legislation to an electorate. You are not to be told when you trespass upon the territory of science by a fashionable lecturer, nor are you to be warned back by the hidden nobody of a newspaper lest you outstrip the limit of morality.

Your Office is divine. 'The Holy Ghost hath set you Bishops to rule the Church of God,' and to you Jehovah speaks by his Prophet. 'Now, O son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the House of Israel. Therefore thou shalt hear the word from My mouth, and thou shalt tell it them from Me.'

Nobly has that Office been fulfilled in the days of the penal past. But the shadow that lay upon our land at Dr. Nulty's birth has been lifted, and the dawn that breaks above his tomb is brightening fast. The clouds that seemed ever destined to darken and depress the mind and heart of our people, and which threw over the nation's life only the dull hues of despondency, brightened by fitful gleam between sorrow passing away and sorrow still to come—as, 'mid the tear and smile of our climate, the sadness of our sky is only lit by a light that bursts through

clouds that come and clouds that go—these clouds which overshadowed all the days of a long history, now appear as though they would roll aside, and let the sunshine of prosperity fall full upon us. It would seem as though, while the languid smile which gives a melancholy tenderness to our landscape may ne'er increase, there is yet forming over the horizon of our country's life an arc of peace, serene with growing hope, unmarred by mist, brilliant with the rising promise of long, clear splendour.

Yet there is danger—not less, but greater. Not that our faith may fail while we stand on guard with the sleepless vigilance of persecuted men; but that, when the conflict is over, ease may bring indolence, indolence apathy, and apathy indifference to God. It is not now the danger that we be shipwrecked by the storm, but that we strike, near home, against hidden rock, and perish miserably in the calm. Ireland will never deny the Faith. Might she ever forget her allegiance to the Church? Nay! nay! So long our Shepherds led us, sure they still will lead us on. 'The Shepherd goeth before, and the sheep follow him.'

Oh! People and Priests of Meath! join strong clasp of friendship as you stand at this turning-point in human history, at this new, strange era in the records of our race. Pause to learn the lesson of the past, the heroism of your Fathers' Faith, the warmth of their Irish love; and, as you pause, listen. Do not the tenderness of mutual sorrow and the comfort of mutual joy mingle into one dear old melody that is never forgotten, the song of the Soggarth aroon? Then face the future, shoulder to shoulder, with your Soggarth

aroon. Did he fly from the typhus, or shrink from the cholera, your brave Soggarth aroon? Did he not listen to your innocent prattle in childhood, and play with you? and when, in old age, dreary, deserted, disconsolate, with nothing but memory to love, and nothing to live for but death, and no one to talk to, did he not listen and weep with you, tear for tear, your gentle Soggarth aroon? When you were thrown out on the roadside, who stood by you? When you crept into the workhouse, who followed you there? When you were hungry, who helped you? When you were sad, who cheered you? When you were gay, who laughed with you? Who, but your big-hearted Soggarth aroon? Who held your hand back from crime? Your holy Soggarth aroon. Who pitied you, poor Prodigal, and forgave you, like Jesus? Your friend, your father, your mother-like Soggarth aroon. Then, in God's name, brightly and fearlessly face the future, hand in hand, heart with heart, shoulder to shoulder, with your Soggarth aroon.

May God, in His great mercy, grant that, when you come to die, your living Soggarth aroon bend over you with a last blessing, and your dead Soggarth aroon welcome you to Heaven.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PASTORAL STAFF AND RING<sup>1</sup>

*Behold, the Lord God shall come with strength, and His arm shall rule. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work is before Him. He shall feed His Flock like a shepherd. He shall gather together the lambs with His arm, and shall carry them in His bosom. But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall take wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.—Isaias, xl. 10, 11, 31.*

OLD Rome was once modern. Her strength had built up an empire unequalled ever upon the earth. Her character had moulded a law that has been since the basis of all human rule. Her mind and taste had created a literature which since has been the standard of excellence in the world's schools. When Rome was at the very pinnacle of her material power, in the fullest blaze of her intellectual success, Peter appeared. Rome could not understand Peter. The doctrine which he taught, and the authority which he claimed, were absolutely opposed to Modern Thought. Rome resented this, and sought to get rid of it in the old Roman way. She fastened Peter to a cross, and buried his Church in the Catacombs. But, though the man died, the Apostle lived, and his Church grew strong and

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Consecration of the Most Reverend Doctor Gaffney, Lord Bishop of Meath, delivered at the Cathedral, Mullingar, June 25, 1899.

stately in her grave. When Rome that was once modern had become ancient, her sword was broken, her eagles buried, her law and literature only saved from decay by the touch of the Fisherman she had despised, the Cross glittered upon the Capitol, and Peter sat on Caesar's throne.

As the ages passed, the world changed its mind. The old Roman Empire persecuted the Church; the new Roman Empire patronised her. The first Caesar flung the Christian into the amphitheatre; the later-day Caesar enthroned himself in the Sanctuary. Diocletian drew the sword. Henry IV. seized the Crozier. The Modern Thought of the eleventh century could not understand why a Bishop should not be an official of the State. But Peter lived in the person of the fearless Hildebrand, the great Saint Gregory VII., and the Thought of the times, in the person of Henry IV. of Germany, knelt, in the end, penitent and suppliant, 'mid the winter snow, under the walls of Canossa.

The Modern Thought of the sixteenth century, intoxicated with the conceit of new powers, and delirious with the excitement of new ways and new worlds, took the most reckless step that had been taken since Christ first sent Peter to teach the world. It repudiated the authority of the Teacher, raised the revolt of rationalism against Faith, and defiantly declared in the face of the Apostle its right to private judgment. But, that, too, is ancient, now. The ruthless tooth of its own child, Rationalism, is rending the Reformation in twain; and the disjointed remnants of its Churches, flung out upon the sea of individual belief, are either being carried back to the old Church that Christ founded, or they are drifting, on chance waves of dis-

cordant opinions, towards the desert shore of a mere nominal Christianity, or towards the rocks of absolute unbelief.

The Modern Thought of the dawning twentieth century has much in it that is as threadbare as the worn-out theories of ancient days. It is as voluptuous as Epicurus, and at heart as impatient of Faith as Nero. It is as eager as Henry of Germany or Napoleon of France to rule the Spirit by the Sceptre, and to submit the Crozier to the Crown. It is Luther without his monk's frock. It is Henry VIII. without his royal robe. It has, however, much of its own that is admirable and sound; its superb science, its kind philanthropy, its free and fair treatment of the mass of men. In one way, it is very new and very dangerous. It hypnotises even Catholic Thought that is not on its guard. I will quote one typical instance of this. In the May number of the *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, 1899, an educated Catholic Gentleman wrote, speaking of himself: 'All that he saw, all that he heard in conversation, all that he read in authorised sources, tended to convince him that Catholic Theology was hopelessly at variance with all that is sound or healthy in the Modern World.'

On the other hand, there is amongst Catholics, especially amongst Catholics of the quick-witted and high-souled Keltic race, an intense eagerness to understand the truths of their Religion, that so, while enjoying all the lasting advantages of modern science and of modern success, they may see through and avoid the fascinating eccentricities and bewildering whims that come and go with Modern Thought.

Wherefore, on this sacred occasion, when, in a

mysterious moment, the Spirit of Pentecost breathes again, quickening afresh within a human soul the authority and the charity of the Apostles who never die, it would appear due to Catholic thought and Catholic feeling, to explain the full meaning of such divine office. This is typified by the Pastoral Staff and by the Ring.

The Bishop's Staff or Crozier signifies his Apostolic Power ; the Ring, his Apostolic Love. The Staff is in the hand, emblem of authority ; the Ring encircles the finger, a sign of the heart that rules the hand.

The power of the Pastoral Staff is twofold. Between God and man the Bishop stands. He brings Heaven down to earth, and he brings earth back to Heaven. By the divine Power of Order, as it is called, he gives God's grace to man. By the divine Power of Jurisdiction, he guides man unto God.

The Power of Order needs little explanation. It works through the Sacraments, of which the Bishop is by Divine Right the dispenser and the guardian. By virtue of the fullness of the Priesthood which is in him, the Bishop not only breaks the Bread of Life to his little ones, and washes the prodigal soul in the Blood of the Lamb that it become as white as wool, but he alone can transmit to men the power which Christ gave to His Apostles at the Last Supper when He said, ' Do this in memory of Me ' ; he alone can hallow human hearts with the Power of redeeming Love, that Power which Christ gave, when, breathing upon His Apostles, He said, ' Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven.' Thus, the Power of Order means the efficacy and the honour of that anointed hand which can create within



men's souls the fullness of the gift and the fullness of the giving of the Grace of God.

The Pastoral Staff further and more fully means the Power of Jurisdiction. It means the guidance of the Shepherd. Now, the Flock of Christ is led to God by the Supernatural Truth that enlightens the mind and by supernatural worth that elevates the will. Therefore, the power of Pastoral Jurisdiction includes divine authority to teach and divine authority to command.

Now, in the first place, in the expounding and enforcing of Revelation, or, as it is often otherwise put, in the matter of Faith and Morals, the Church is infallible in her teaching and inevitable in her command. She has, within that sphere, a Divine Right to claim unquestioning assent to her doctrine and unswerving obedience to her law.

In the second place, with regard to matters that are purely temporal or material, the Church herself repudiates all power. Christ did not claim it: 'My Kingdom,' He said, 'is not of this world'; and, again, when it was said to Him, 'Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me,' the Master answered, 'Man, who hath appointed Me judge or divider over you?'

Such was also the teaching of the Apostles. We read in the Acts how the Twelve, having gathered the multitude of the disciples, said, 'It is not reasonable that we should leave the Word of God to serve tables. Wherefore look ye out among you men of good report whom we may appoint over this business, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.'

In the third place, matters in themselves merely material, civil, social, or political, may yet be logically inseparable from matters of Faith, or practically identical with matters of Morality. Over all such matters the Church has jurisdiction not because they are material, but because they have become spiritual. Indeed, unless she had power to correct human thought when it contradicts her teaching, and unless she had power to condemn human conduct when it is in revolt against her law, the Faith of the Church would be but a phantom, her Morality a myth. This is a statement which no Catholic can deny. In the plan drawn up by Pontifical authority for the proceedings of the Vatican Council, the following Canon appears : 'Should anyone say that the Infallibility of the Church is restricted to such matters alone as are contained in Divine Revelation, and that it does not also extend to those other truths which are of necessity required in order that the Deposit of Revelation may be thoroughly safeguarded, let him be Anathema.'

Now, had the Vatican Council continued, that Canon would have been defined as pertaining to Faith. But nothing can ever be defined which is not, and has not always been, really contained in Revelation, even though it may never yet have been explicitly declared. For there is no new Revelation beyond that given by Christ to His Apostles. Again, Pope Pius IX. solemnly condemned the assertion that, provided they are not dogmas of Faith or Morals, one can, without sin, and without loss of Catholic allegiance, refuse one's assent and obedience to those judgments and decrees of the Apostolic Chair, the object of which is declared to

have reference to the general good of the Church, its rights and government.

In the fourth place, and finally, the Church is infallible in determining, not merely in theory but in practice, the provinces of Faith and Morals, and therefore she has divine power to declare, decide, define the limits of her own jurisdiction. In support of this assertion, I quote two great Cardinals, not on account of their own personal authority, however grave this be, but as witnesses to the unquestionable teaching of the Church. But, first, I must point out a strange error that has crept into some men's minds. They think that we are free to deny whatever has not been actually defined as of Faith. No. We must admit all that is certainly taught as certainly true by the Church. Should one deny a doctrine defined to be of Faith, one is a heretic. Should one deny a doctrine not defined yet commonly taught by the Doctors of the Church, one is not thereby a heretic, although such denial is a sin against Faith. For instance, to deny the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin would be a grave sin, although not the sin of heresy. Now, Cardinal Mazella wrote: 'Since it is certain that the Church is infallible in guarding and understanding the deposit of Faith strictly so called, and since this infallibility is revealed, it belongs to the Church to decide what is the true meaning of infallibility, and what is its extent and its intensity.' Cardinal Manning wrote in reply to Mr. Gladstone's *Vaticanism*, 'The Spiritual Power knows with divine certainty the limits of its own jurisdiction.' And, again, 'Any power which is independent and can alone fix the limits of its own jurisdiction, and thereby fix

the limits of all other jurisdictions, is, by the very fact, supreme. The Church of Christ, within the sphere of Revelation—that is, of Faith and Morals—is all this, or nothing, or worse than nothing, an imposition and an usurpation.’ And again: ‘But who can define what is or is not within the jurisdiction of the Church? It is clear the civil power cannot define how far the circumference of Faith and Morals extends. If it could, it would be invested with one of the supernatural endowments of the Church. Therefore, it is the Church or nobody. This last supposition leads to chaos. Therefore, the Church alone can fix the limits of its own jurisdiction.’

All this enables us to understand the power of a Bishop. Briefly it is this. On the one hand, a Bishop is not supreme Pastor. Therefore, he is not infallible. Therefore, he does not define the matter of Faith or Morals. Therefore, he does not decide, not even do Bishops in provincial or national Synod decide, as Pope Benedict XIV. clearly lays down, questions controverted among Theologians. Therefore, from his teaching or command, appeal to higher spiritual power is always possible. On the other hand, the Bishop’s power is not human but divine, a power held and used by Divine Right. ‘Take heed to yourself,’ St. Paul said, ‘and to the whole Flock wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops to rule the Church of God.’ Therefore, a Bishop is not a mere messenger or mouthpiece of the Church, as simple Priests are of the Bishop, but he is a real and authentic teacher with power to declare how the principles of Faith and Morals apply to the existing state of facts and circumstances within his own Diocese, and he is a real legislator with authority to make

new local laws. Therefore, the civil power has no right to define or limit the jurisdiction of a Bishop. Pope Pius IX. most solemnly condemned the following assertion: 'The civil authority can mix itself up in matters relating to Religion, Morality, and Spiritual Government. Hence, it can pass judgment upon those instructions which the Pastors of the Church, in the exercise of their ministry, issue as a rule for Consciences.' Therefore, much less can the Faithful fix the boundaries of the Bishop's power. They are the Flock; he, their Shepherd. The Flock must follow; for the Shepherd leads by right of God. 'He that standeth not with his Bishop,' wrote Saint Ignatius of Antioch in the second century, 'standeth not with God.' 'Behold the Lord shall come with strength, and His arm shall rule.'

To deny the Divine Right of a Bishop to rule would be to revive in Modern Thought a pagan notion of old Rome. To subject a Bishop's authority to the State, would be to adopt in our own days a principle of Henry IV. of Germany and of Henry VIII. of England.

To fix or limit the jurisdiction of a Bishop by the opinion of the Press, or by the will of the people, would be to attempt again to bring the Mission of the Holy Ghost before the bar of Martin Luther's 'private judgment.'

At the giving of the Pastoral Staff, the consecrating Prelate says, 'Receive the Staff of Pastoral Office, that, in correcting vice, thou mightest be loving while stern, pronouncing judgment uninfluenced by anger, in encouraging virtue, winning the souls that hear thee, in all thy gentle way not abandoning the censorship of due severity.'

Now, Brethren, we shall study the meaning of the

Ring. When giving the Ring to the new Bishop, the consecrating Prelate says, 'Receive the Ring, pledge of thy troth, that, being graced with unsullied Faith, thou mayest guard the Spouse of God, His Holy Church, stainless.'

'The hand of the Lord was upon me,' cried the Prophet Ezechiel, 'and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, Thou knowest. Again He said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones. Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. So I prophesied as I was commanded, and, as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold! a shaking, and the bones came together each one to its joint, and when I beheld, lo! the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin was stretched out over them; but there was no breath in them. Then saith He unto me, Prophesy unto the Spirit, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.'

Man lay mouldering upon the dark earth. The vapours exhaled from putrid crimes hung in gloomy canopy over the dust of a dead love, and the pestilential mists of decayed hopes blotted out the light of Heaven. The nerve of God-given energies had been unstrung. The strength of immortal aims had crumbled like the muscle of a corpse. The robustness and the beauty which the material shrine can

have, when the Spirit dwells within it, had rotted when the Spirit fled. The ghosts of murdered truths that had been suffocated by stupor or strangled by sin, distorted now by false gleam or phantom shadow into forms of superhuman shape and size, stalked about in blasphemous and grotesque caricature as gods or goddesses of the unseen world. The talent or the art of Greece, the strength or the law of Rome, gave a higher animal life to the mere material man. But the spiritual man was dead, and the bones of lost generations encumbered the dark earth.

‘Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.’ Jesus, breathing upon His Apostles said, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’

Lo! a strange vision dawns upon the world, the Spouse of Christ, the Holy Church of God. Lit with light from Heaven, she reveals mysteries unto men so divine that reason is lost in wonder at them, yet so human that without them reason is incomplete. Inexorable in her logic and masterful in her law, she is yet unwearied in her patience and motherlike in her pity. Weak as a child, and without human weapon, she has slowly yet securely conquered the might of the Roman, of the Goth, of the Saracen, and of the Saxon. Simple as a child, and without human science, she has calmly yet completely won the noblest intellects amongst men to become her pupils first and then her Apostles. The only barrier against anarchy and the only check upon despotism, she has broken the chain of the slave and steadied the throne of the ruler. Every kind of human force and every form of human craft has been used against

her ; but trial only cleansed her robe from stains of matter, as the rain-drops wash the dust from flowers. Yea ! even when from within her own human life spots of disease appeared, she drew from within her soul a divine antidote that renewed her strength to sturdier health and clearer loveliness. So, has she lived throughout the ages. So, does she still live, yet she has not grown old. Now, in the twentieth century of her life, she is as buoyant in her energy, as beautiful in her innocence, as fresh in her enterprise, and as triumphant in her advance as when first, over the bones of a dead earth, was breathed the Spirit of Pentecost.

By that Spirit hath she triumphed. By that Spirit she shall triumph still. Without that Spirit, she were dead. Her power is of the Holy Ghost. Her law is of love. 'Without Charity she is nothing.' Without love, her Faith were dead, and would fall a meaningless message from her lips. Without love, her Hope were vain as the breath that is blown about by the breeze. For, 'the greatest of these is Charity.' The Pastoral Staff is powerless without the Ring.

Nay ! nay ! The triumph of the Church in this dear land we love is not in the grand Cathedrals which have sprung up upon the soil as emblematic acts of our Irish Faith in God ; nor in those countless Convent homes where innocence dwells and whence is spread around, like fragrant balm of healthy shrub, an atmosphere of truth and a purity of love ; nor in the gradual breaking open of the gates of knowledge that had been close barred against us ; nor in the honour open to our race ; nor even in the reverence shown for our Religion.



Nay ! nay ! That may be much. There is yet much more. That is all outward. Love dwells within. The Church triumphs most when the Spirit breathes within the very heart of her children, vivifying the dry bones of mere humanity with the breath of Divine Love, so that, from being dead they are made living, from being cold they are made kind, from being many they are made one, until, with most beloved bond of brotherhood, with most strong clasp of sympathy, they become 'an exceeding great army,' one holy people, one happy flock, wedded, with the Ring of his spiritual espousals, to the Shepherd of their souls. 'Behold the Lord God shall come with strength and His arm shall rule. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work is before Him. He shall feed His Flock like a Shepherd. He shall gather together the lambs with His arm, and shall carry them in His bosom.'

To-day the Spirit of God breathes His creative love into the soul of your Bishop. The Holy Ghost hath chosen one fitted for His work.

Born in the Parish of Mount Nugent, Doctor Gaffney learned in his boyhood, by the lovely shores of Lough Sheelan, that taste for the classic authors which he afterwards taught, as successor to Doctor Nulty in Saint Mary's College at Mullingar. At Maynooth, Doctor Gaffney, like his predecessor, Doctor Nulty, obtained a 'solus' on the Dunboyne,—that is to say, among the brilliant and the studious he was so far first as to be not only foremost, but in honour quite alone.

He began his career as Curate at Tullamore. What high place he held even then in the esteem and reverence

of people and of Priests is shown by the fact, which I state on the authority of a venerable Jesuit Father, who at the time was stationed at Tullabeg, that it was even then commonly said, Father Gaffney will one day wear the Mitre of Meath. Tullamore was his first and only Curacy ; Clara his first and only Parish. Another fact, one which makes all praise superfluous, because it is an evidence of the admiration and esteem entertained for Doctor Gaffney's talent and character by the entire Priesthood of Ireland, is the fact that the Union of the former students of Maynooth unanimously elected him as their first President.

A mind of rare intellectual power, heightened by Theological thought, broadened by scientific study, cultivated by artistic taste ; a character, always kind, never compromising, shaped by noble self-control to noble aim ; an appreciation, quickened by wide sympathies, balanced by watchful prudence ; a generosity, genial in courteous hospitality, so as to draw his brother Priests within the circle of sacred friendship ; an administrative ability which has left in the Church of Clara imperishable proofs of what wise management can do for good with little money ; these are some few of many statements made by many who have known your Bishop long and loved him well. Yet, I must pause. I wish to remain far below what I might most truly say in praise ; for, what his friends know to be fact might to a stranger sound like flattery. One word I must say : it is the dearest wish of your Bishop that the clouds, which threw some years ago such shadow over Meath, as, in the gloom, to let opinions clash with loss of love, may, as they have now passed, never more return ; but that the hearts

of Meath may bow in loving allegiance beneath their Shepherd's Staff, because they know that the hand which wields it wears their Bishop's Ring.

Brethren, history of old moved with the slow step of centuries, and generations died in the same political atmosphere where they were born. Now, wars are a matter of weeks ; states rise or fall with the ebb or flow of the Stocks ; and a nation may be shattered by the throb of an electric wire. We are on the eve of a crisis. We are hushed in expectation. We know not when nor where nor how some strange, quick, drastic destiny may come. But we do know that the nations who speak the tongue we speak are stretching forth their hands from across the seas, and if those hands are strongly clasped they may hold the empire of the earth. In that new world, wider than our own, the influence of the Keltic race must decide how far Catholic truth and love shall triumph, and, how that Keltic influence shall be used depends much upon the people and Priests of Meath.

Then trust in God and take your Bishop to your heart. The earth may quiver with social earthquake until nations totter to their fall. The deep sea of human passion may wreck the prosperity of peoples as it has wrecked the pride of Kings. Science may grow blind between the glare of material knowledge and the gloom of spiritual doubt, until men vaguely ask, 'What is Truth?' Vice may strut as Virtue, until happiness, as well as duty, disappears in the painful pursuit of pleasure. 'But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall take wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.'

Fear not, my Lord of Meath, to take the Pastoral Staff. Fear not ; for the Spirit hath breathed upon you, and you are mere man no more, but Bishop. Fear not ; for your people welcome you. Under their roof-tree, by their hearthstone, aye ! in their heart you hold the throne of Spiritual affection. You are the Father of your Flock, the Shepherd of your people, the Bridegroom of the Church of Meath. Fear not ; for around you, with the sweet and sacred strands of Priestly friendship, those whom you have long known and loved, are gathered in the strong support of mutual brotherhood. Fear not ; for is not his spirit here to-day, your father and your friend, whose hand lies cold beneath that stone, but whose living prayer appeals to God that you, his beloved son and successor may happily hold the Staff he held, with even greater zeal than was his own, and, with still stronger love and gentler prudence, rule the destinies of Meath. Fear not ; for, ' Behold ! the Lord God shall come with strength and His arm shall rule. Behold ! His reward is with Him. He shall feed His Flock like a Shepherd. He shall gather together the lambs with His arm, and shall carry them in His bosom. But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall take wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.'

## CHAPTER III

### ‘ UNTO THE ALTAR OF GOD ’ <sup>1</sup>

*Send forth Thy light and Thy truth. They have led me and have brought me unto Thy holy hill and unto Thy tabernacle. And I will go in unto the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth,—*  
Psalm xlii. 3, 4.

AN altar is an emblem. It speaks of Sacrifice. It is the slab uplifted for the offering. It is the block sacred to the immolation. It is the stone hallowed for the holocaust. It is the table spread unto the partaking of the victim. Thus, the altar has its explanation in the supreme act of worship which by it is rendered unto God.

Sacrifice is itself a symbol. Man naturally shows in outward action the inward emotion of his soul. He is neither spirit alone, nor only clay, and therefore the human outcome of his human nature, its right counterpart, its bounden worth, and its true utterance, embrace the twin elements of his human life—an element that is of Earth and an element that is of Heaven. Hence, to acknowledge God's mastership over all and man's dependence on God's help, to accept and to express God's lordship over life and man's allegiance to God's law, to deprecate God's anger

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Consecration of an Altar in memory of the late Dr. Lynch, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, at Tullow, Co. Carlow, on Sunday, July 1, 1900.

against sin and to plead man's impotence to atone, something that feeds or serves man's life is taken as symbol of his living self, and in his stead and for his sake offered, immolated, and destroyed.

This meaning suggests a metaphor. As the altar is type of Sacrifice, so an altar in memory of the dead recalls the offering—with fragrant Faith and incense prayer, with immolating knife of self-denial, with cleansing flame of charity—of a human heart to God. May I presume to unfold the teaching of this altar and trace, even though it be only in faint and feeble outline, the sacrificial aspect of the life of Dr. Lynch.

The venerable Bishop stood on the playground of his boyhood. The same bright sun of June shone still that had gladdened the Saint Aloysius' Day of long ago. The same white summer clouds floated high and far, like dim thoughts of distant tears. The same breeze brought its quiet message from the mountains, and whispered its memories of dear dead years to the woods that sighed and waved their arms. The same shout of the lads at play rang merrily out, as though life were always young. The same tall solemn Towers looked silently on, as though life were always old. That morning, when giving their First Communion to some of the boys, the Bishop had told them how he himself had made his own First Communion within the beloved walls of Clongowes Wood.

The scene is the same, but how changed the circumstance! The life is the same, but how different the blossom of its promise and the fruit of its maturity! Once, a boy, full of untaught hope and untried energy, he had looked forward to the future. Now, a Bishop, aged, experienced, he looks back upon the past.

Through it all, his steps had been led by a power unseen. What youth only vaguely believes, becomes evident to age. The song of the Psalmist had echoed the hope of his youth. ‘ Send forth Thy light and Thy truth. They have led me. I will go in unto the Altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth.’ Again the Psalmist sings the canticle of his age—‘ The unknown and hidden ways of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest to me.’

Watch how, from childhood unto death, the Spirit led him to the Altar.

Born, at Dublin, in the seventh year of the century which has almost ended, he was sent, when about eight years of age, to Clongowes Wood College, where he completed his early education. One of its first students, as he loved to proclaim himself, he always returned with affectionate gratitude to the ‘ scene of his boyhood’s years.’

But God gave to his youth a joy more deep and more true than that of the innocent laughter of the child or the enthusiastic pastime of the boy. In his very schooldays he learned the first and fundamental lesson of life, that its true worth, its real dignity, and even its enduring happiness are only bought by the sacrifice of pleasure. Right action is the cause, the standard, the test of right pleasure. The schoolboy put duty before enjoyment, work before ease, study before play, and thus showed a better understanding of the philosophy of human life than those arrogant professors of a silly science who make utility the measure of right and pleasure the test of use, which is to make a conclusion the standard of its principle, an effect the criterion of its cause. But pleasure is

nature's allurements for the brute ; virtue is God's motive for the man. It was the boy's first step towards the Altar.

When he left Clongowes, the generous character of the youth turned his first thought towards that profession which is the kindest science and the most sacred art of all that are only human. His love of Medicine did not leave him, for we find him afterwards, when Superior at Castleknock, practising his healing powers upon the boys with what they considered too great faith in the efficacy of nauseous drugs.

But the human attractions of Medicine disappeared before the dawn of a divine day. ' Send forth Thy light and Thy truth. They have brought me unto Thy tabernacle.' It was the second step towards the Altar. It was the sacrifice of personal profit. It brought him into the Sanctuary.

Great mental power is never created, nor, if inborn, is it ever concentrated, except at the cost of pleasure. Yet, the sacrifice of enjoyment for the sake of energy gives a man only his weapons for work. These may be only weapons that wound, like the talent of bad or ambitious men. They may be made means of healthful and hallowed influence amongst one's fellow men ; but only at the price of yielding one's personal profit for the gaining of more universal good. Mark, I say ' personal profit.' To sacrifice, for the sake of others, one's own pleasure or one's own profit, may sometimes be a bounden duty. Beyond that, it is often a glorious vocation. But to sacrifice the soul itself, its truth, its honour, or its innocence,—this would be a moral suicide, a grotesque profanation of nature's law, an appalling insult against God. Modern



Philosophers, loosened from Religion, swing towards extravagant extremes of folly and of vice. One sets personal pleasure as the only aim of life, cynical selfishness as its standard, the brute as its model, and scientific sin as its God. The other pushes self-forgetfulness to the obliteration of virtue by the merging of the individual into a mere factor for the amusement of the mass of mere material men. Now, man cannot be his own end, nor can he be a mere means. Outside and above him are absolute Truth and inevitable Right. Towards them he must tend. Between them and his soul nothing else can stand. The finite disappears in the presence of the Infinite. Man may sacrifice for others' sake his work, his rest, his pleasure, his profit, but not his real self. His soul must remain his own and God's.

We are seldom conscious of the full evidence or depth of principles even when they decide our most important steps in life. Their influence is often unfelt when most forceful.

When Dr. Lynch was a young student at Maynooth, the principle of his absolute allegiance to God and paramount duty of self formation appeared in the complete subservience of study to piety. Then, as ever afterwards, he put character above intellect. He was studious. He had a clear head and sound sense. He was not brilliant. But he had something better than brilliant powers: he had a balanced character.

On the other hand, his unselfish desire to sacrifice the labour of his life in doing good and bearing blessing, won him, towards the end of his course, to join enthusiastically with some others under Dean Dooley in what

then seemed to many the wild project of forming a Congregation for Missions amongst the poor.

In time of great distress of mind, a great soul sang : ' Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on ; . . . I do not ask to see the distant scene ; one step enough for me. . . . So long Thy power hath blest me, Sure it still will lead me on.' Step by step, the Spirit of God was leading Dr. Lynch towards greater and greater sacrifice. He had made the sacrifice of personal pleasure and of personal profit. His life remained : that, too, he could sacrifice to God. He could lay upon the altar all ownership of temporal goods, to be poor with the poor Christ. He could sacrifice all human love to give his virgin heart to the Virgin Christ. He could sacrifice his will, to have no other will on Earth, like Christ, but the Will of His Father in Heaven. It was the holocaust of life. ' The Spirit breathes where He listeth.' He heard the Voice—he knew not whence it came, nor whither it went. But it led him to the Altar. In 1833, he was ordained Priest of St. Vincent of Paul by Dr. Murray.

We need not follow all the windings of those difficult days, nor pause to gaze upon each doubt, trial, privation, or disappointment of the young Apostle. Providence had destined him to shape the character of future Apostles. Appointed Vice-President in 1834, he did much to give its tone of studious holiness to one of the great glories of Catholic Ireland, the College of Castleknock. Afterwards, during most critical times, he successfully ruled, for eight years, the destinies of his beloved Irish College at Paris.

After some experience as Coadjutor Bishop in the Western District of Scotland, Dr. Lynch was appointed,

in 1869, Coadjutor to the late Dr. Walsh. For little more than a year he remained at Carlow. He then came to this parish, which he never afterwards left, even when, on Dr. Walsh's death in 1888, he became Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, the home of his venerable old age, his own dear Tullow.

How can a stranger dare to intrude upon the memory of those beloved bonds which bound the venerable Bishop to his chosen flock? The stranger may, indeed, know that the spire of your Church was the first to spring from Irish soil towards Heaven when Catholic Emancipation had been won, as Carlow was the first Cathedral, and that, beneath this sacred spot, with Dr. Lynch, two of his brother Bishops, Dr. Delany and Dr. Corcoran, sleep in Christ. But what a stranger cannot know is the full meaning of this Memorial Altar. That it is, in the silent eloquence of its marble beauty, an expression of home memories, is shown by the fact of the Parishioners having borne three-fourths of the expense. But home memories are too sacred for the record of a stranger. Yet, in that wide home, which is the brotherhood of Christ, a deep and tender sympathy enables all to feel the influence of such a life as that of Dr. Lynch.

We do not claim for him any such gift of nature as makes a man the master of his fellows; nor do we claim that to him God gave such grace as dazzles us in the Saints. Nay! we claim not that, and yet we claim much more. We know that his life was given, in absolute and ceaseless oblation, unto God, until the light of Faith illumined his every thought, and in his every word was heard the echo of the holy fullness of his heart. Mark what this means.

Man must have one absorbing aim, or else his energies are divided. That aim must be a great one, or else man's energies are dwarfed. That aim must be outside man's self, or else his energies are stagnant. That aim must be divine, or else man's energies are imprisoned. Ah ! forbid not the soul to soar ; thou canst not tie its thought to time, nor chain its love to space. Then, thou must let thy will follow an aim that is infinite. Now, this must mean sacrifice, that life is lost to man to be found again in God. ' Who loseth his life shall find it.' Yet, such sacrifice is not sad. ' 'Tis good for me to cling to God,' and ' What, apart from Thee, O God, have I desired on Earth? '

But, again, all this may be done with the abstraction of a student, or with the simplicity of a child. God's light may lead us in our prayer, when we pass outside our daily life to enter into the divine Presence ; or God's Presence may be the one great fact that lives within our daily life.

To Dr. Lynch, Faith was a light that did not fade before the preoccupations of practical business, nor wane when worldly cares arose. Those who have known the simple holy Bishop, will well remember how naturally and inevitably the thought of God ran through his ordinary speech, until his simplest conversation was like a sermon. To some this might appear irksome. He could not help it. To him, God's Presence was not a dream, but a reality ; not a phantom, but a fact.

Thus did God's light and truth lead him all through life unto the Altar. Thus did God, who had given joy to his youth, crown his old age with sacred gladness, and bless his last sleep with hallowed peace. No

violence of pain, no fierceness of disease wrenched or racked his mortal frame. No phantom of a sick brain clouded his consciousness. No fever of an agitated soul unnerved his resignation or his trust. In the clear calm atmosphere of the truth he had known and loved, he sank, like the setting of a summer sun, slowly and gently, from day to twilight, and from twilight unto night. Wearied with the labours of his long and devoted life, he prayed the last prayers for the evening of our exile, received the last Unction for his journey home, and, on December 19, 1896, attended by his Priests, his dearest Vincentian friend, and by the young, able, and energetic Bishop, in whose strong yet kind hand he was to leave his Pastoral Staff, Dr. Lynch slept in Christ.

God grant our end be like to his ; that when the dread moment comes for time to fade before Eternity, for Earth to vanish and God appear, for the body to fall back into clay and the soul to face its Judgment, God grant we sleep in peace and awake in joy. That so it be, live looking towards the light that leads thee to the Altar, even though it be the Altar of Sacrifice, for 'tis the Altar of God who giveth joy to thy youth. ' Send forth Thy light and Thy truth. They have led me, and have brought me unto Thy holy hill and unto Thy tabernacle. And I will go in unto the Altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth.'

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MARTYR PRIMATE OF IRELAND

*The just shall be in everlasting remembrance : he shall not fear the evil hearing.*—Psalm cxl. 7.

CYNICS and ascetics talk glibly about the emptiness of fame. Most men, however, hold that whilst the fame which is only founded upon unreal merit or upon undeserved esteem is itself false, there is yet a true fame, which is founded upon a sterling worth and which is the worthy object of a noble ambition. Those men who have highest reverence for honour are also those who have highest hope that their deeds of honour shall have influence over their fellows, nor pass away from the minds of men without some tribute of gratitude or some token of esteem. In some matters, all good men look for and love a remembrance that shall last beyond their mortal life. Friends fondly hope that even when their bones are mouldering beneath the green grass, their memory shall be still fresh and fragrant within the minds and hearts of their friends. A noble patriot may also nobly hope that, by the grave where his bones are

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Dedication of a new Church at Oldcastle, Co. Meath, in memory of Blessed Oliver Plunket, preached at Oldcastle, Sunday, May 1, 1904.

buried, the old folk shall ever tell their children's children how he truly loved his country and for her dear sake nobly lived or nobly died.

Be this as it may, a nation cherishes the memory of her heroes. The statue that proudly stands, encircled by the throbbing tides of human energy, in the very heart of a great city, or the monumental tomb that reposes in silent majesty under the solemn Cathedral aisle, is the tribute of a people's gratitude. But the memory of great men, whether it be emblazoned in bronze, or expressed in stone, or eloquent in artistic emblem, is much more than a mere outward utterance of gratitude to a dead hero : it is also, for the living children of the people whom he loved and served, a teaching that appeals to noble ideas and a motive that calls to noble aims.

All this is true of the people of God. For whatever in the nature of man is good has been elevated and consecrated in the Kingdom of the Man who is God. Thus the Church of Christ enshrines the memory of His heroes in her monuments, and from their lives learns a more divine enthusiasm as well as a more heroic human love.

Wherefore, you, children of Catholic Keltic Meath, have rightly chosen to honour by a noble monument the memory of a noble son of your own soil, born and bred at your own Loughcrew ; and, as this great man was also a great Martyr, you have also rightly chosen to make his monument a Church worthy to be your human home for your living Christ. Three chief characteristics arrest at once our thought and fascinate our fancy when we turn to linger over the life of Oliver Plunket : his manliness, his love of

country, and his holiness. He was a great man, a great patriot, and a great Martyr.

It is indeed an honour to a man to have made or won his own nobility. Yet it is also an honour to a man to have the high duty as well as the high privilege to be the worthy son of a nobility which is the honourable heirloom made or won by his ancestors.

Born of a race which still holds high titles of nobility, Oliver Plunket first saw the light as it was shadowed by the clinging clouds or brightened by the fitful sunshine that mingle their tears and smiles amid the mountains of Loughcrew. The second quarter had begun of the seventeenth century, during which so many tears were to obscure the rare smiles that passed over the face of our country until the century, towards its close, showed to our disconsolate Ireland her noble Martyr Primate hanging from a London gibbet. The boy, at an early age, heard the voice of God in his heart, and until his sixteenth year his budding hope of the Priesthood was fostered under the holy and learned care of his relative, Dr. Patrick Plunket, then titular Abbot of Saint Mary's, Dublin. In 1646, he was admitted as a student to the illustrious Irish College at Rome, then under the care of the Jesuit Fathers. After the study of Rhetoric, he continued the higher sacred studies. Of him, the Rector of the Irish College, Father Edward Locke, afterwards wrote : ' I, the undersigned, do certify that the Very Rev. Dr. Oliver Plunket, in the Diocese of Meath, in the Province of Armagh, in Ireland, is of Catholic parentage, descended from an illustrious family, on the father's side from the most illustrious Earls of Fingall, and on the mother's side from the most



illustrious Earls of Roscommon, being also connected by birth with the most illustrious Oliver Plunket, Baron and first nobleman of the Diocese of Armagh ; and in this our Irish College he devoted himself with such ardour to Philosophy, Theology and Mathematics, that in the Roman College of the Society of Jesus he was justly ranked amongst the foremost in talent, diligence, and progress in his studies ; these speculative studies being completed, he pursued with abundant fruit the course of Civil and Canon Law, under Mark Anthony de Marascotti, Professor in the Roman Sapienza, and everywhere and at all times he was a model of gentleness, blamelessness, and piety.'

On the completion of his College course, he was ordained Priest in 1654 ; but the state of Ireland was then so disturbed as to render his return practically impossible ; and, with the permission of the General of the Jesuits, he remained for three years more with the Fathers, spending his time in study and in the unostentatious but zealous exercise of the powers of the Priesthood. His reputation for learning and ability gained for him, in 1657, a Chair of Theology in the College of the Propaganda. During the twenty-five years of his sojourn in Rome he enjoyed the intimate friendship of many celebrated and cultured men, like Cardinal Odescalchi, afterwards Pope Innocent XI. He also won, by his kind courtesy, the warm gratitude of many English Protestant visitors. But what he prized above all else was the enthusiastic reverence and affection which he everywhere met in the hospitals from the sick-poor, whom he loved to visit and to succour. It was in one of these hospitals, after his nomination in 1669, to the Archbishopric

of Armagh, that a Polish Priest of rare sanctity foretold to him his future Martyrdom. We learn the state of circumstances, which Doctor Plunket found awaiting him in Ireland, from a letter written by Lord Conway to his brother, Lord Rawdon. 'Dear Brother, I have been all this day with my Lord-Lieutenant or employed about his commands, and I am but newly come from him. Though it be very late, I am to give you notice, by his command, that the King hath privately informed him of two persons sent from Rome, that lie lurking in this country to do mischief. The one is Signor Agnetti, the other is Plunket, designed titular Archbishop of Armagh. If you can dexterously find them out and apprehend them, it will be an acceptable service.'

Leaving Rome, Doctor Oliver Plunket fully realised in his own life the ideal of an accomplished scholar and of a cultured gentleman. That was rather the intellectual aspect of the man. But intellectual greatness makes no man truly great without that nobler greatness which is moral. The vivid light thrown by public attention upon his life in Ireland shows the moral grandeur of Doctor Plunket's character. We can only briefly gaze at some special characteristics.

Unselfishness is the first essential condition to any character that is great in goodness. The absolute disregard of Doctor Plunket for his own comfort or for his own gain, the stern privations which he cheerfully endured in order not to trespass on the generosity of the poor, his disinterested efforts to obtain from Rome financial help for some of his brother Bishops who were no poorer than himself, his readiness to share

his meagre table and his half-roofed cabin with his persecuted friends, his uncompromising refusal of State aid, even when not openly offered as a bribe ;—these are only some stray instances of his unselfishness.

With men of heroic mould, unselfishness becomes merged into self-sacrifice. In order to save every possible farthing for the education of the sons of the despoiled Catholic gentry, Doctor Plunket was content to live on a little oaten bread. Besides understanding the wide and woeful ruin wrought, even amongst his Catholic Flock, by drunkenness, and wishing to guide his Flock by example as well as by advice, he became a total abstainer.

With unselfishness and self-sacrifice, we expect, from heroes in time of war, fearlessness. Through the whirling snow-storm, or through the relentless rain, over the bleak mountain, or 'mid the wild wet wood, over the seething swamp or sinking bog, in spite of strength shattered by constant want, in spite of eyesight injured by constant chill, the intrepid Apostle wandered to bless his poor, to reconcile the sinner, and to encourage the simple unknown saints of persecuted Ireland. The dogs of the law were on his track ; traitors lurked about in ambush ; soldiers were marshalled against him by the Generals of the English King ; and the Ministers of the British Crown were in sore dismay at the power of Oliver Plunket. But Oliver Plunket was fearless.

Fearlessness was not severed from its twin warrior virtue, faithfulness. He was no hireling Shepherd. Threats, he despised ; bribes, he spurned ; the advice of timid wisdom or of over-anxious friendship, he ignored. Nay ! nay ! What ? Leave Ireland for

safe exile and wait for happier days ? No ! Staunch as he is strong, faithful as he is fearless, he will stand his ground to the bitter end. Ireland's Shepherd, true unto death !

One last and greatest quality : he could forgive. No hard or narrow judgment could linger in his great mind ; nor, in his great soul, lurk a sour memory or a vengeful bitterness. Even those who, apostates from their Catholic Faith and profaners of their priestly character, were traitors against chastity and renegades against their vow, even these, the most abject, the most abandoned, the most abominable of men, found always and at once, when trouble, with the grace of God, had brought them to repentance, found always and at once, a full, free, warm welcome to his heart. Those who swore his life away—in horrible and blasphemous defilement of truth, honour, justice, law—these also he forgave, as all his other enemies, with such calm, complete, loving charity, that, for most of them, he gained from God pardon and eternal life. A great teacher, talented, educated, accomplished, cultured ; a great soldier, unselfish, self-sacrificing, fearless, faithful, forgiving, Oliver Plunket was a great man, a grand character, a hero.

Oliver Plunket was also a great leader of men. His leadership was not a striving after selfish greed or personal gain. Not to the gathering of gold, not to the gaining of applause, not to the grasping at power were his great energies given. His mind, his heart, his whole soul, were devoted to working out the widest and truest welfare of his Fatherland. He was a great patriot. Love of country does not always or only mean the heroism which wins in war a

nation's triumph or in its defeat dies upon the battleplain. Peace is the only right aim of war ; and the patriotism which can secure with the Sceptre alone a nation's peace, prosperity, and freedom, is nobler than the patriotism which can only win them by the victory of the sword. Hence, in true statesmanship, consists the first duty of a great leader of men and his best service. Now, statesmanship should not look only to commerce or to science, to industry or to art, but to those aims and influences which shall make a people not only better fed, but also better mannered ; not merely better clad, but also better conducted ; not merely better taught, but also better inclined ; not merely happier, but also holier. These aims a true statesman will seek to achieve not by constraint, but by direction ; not by the lash or fetter of the slave, but by the willing union and loyal help of free men.

At the time of which we speak, British rule in Ireland was at the worst of its brutal blunderings. The English Crown endeavoured by the baton or the bayonet to coerce the Catholics of Ireland into Apostasy, and to win the loyalty of Irish patriots by the plunder of their property. One amongst the many evil results of such savage stupidity was that Irish Catholic gentlemen were driven at last to stand at bay. Their lands had been confiscated, their citizenship forfeited. With no more outlet for escape than the stag of the mountain, and hunted like the wolf in the wood, they could only live by the lawless plunder of their lawless plunderers. To them flocked all who fled from the justice or the injustice of the law. It was an absolute dead-lock. These Tories, as they were

called, could neither escape, nor live in peace, nor hope for pardon. The Tories plundered their enemies, and their friends were plundered by the soldiers. The British Statesmen were too blind to see and too brutal to accept any other alternative than a war of wolves.

The statesmanship of the Primate not only recognised the only right remedy, but with magnificent and magnanimous patriotism he applied it. Himself, dauntless and generous, he went alone into the fastnesses of the forests, sought out the desperadoes in their hiding-places, won their promise of submission if permitted to go abroad, hurried back at once to the Viceroy, Lord Berkeley, 'a moderate and prudent man,' as Dr. Plunket himself calls him, won from him, in turn, a proclamation of pardon for the Tories, hastened once again to the strongholds of these fierce banditti, brought them himself to Dublin, and himself saw them on board ships bound for France or Spain, in whose armies many of them afterwards won honour for their own name and victory for their new country, bequeathing only to the dear old land they loved a lasting regret that such heroes should by bad laws have been lost to Ireland.

A statesman has not merely to remedy the evils which may arise, but much more to procure and to promote the good order and true welfare of the state he serves. The great Archbishop of Armagh, our great Irish Primate, was true Shepherd to his Flock. The state of the country may be in a measure understood from the fact that the Catholics were so staunch in their Faith that, in one place alone, 500 persons died of famine rather than accept food as the price of their

apostasy ; yet in many a Diocese a Bishop had not been seen for forty years until Dr. Plunket came, and for four years throughout eleven Dioceses, with the exception of one aged and decrepit Bishop, Dr. Plunket was the only Shepherd. It is almost incredible how much and how fruitfully he laboured. One fact may give some faint idea of his work. In the first three months after his arrival in Ireland, he gave Confirmation to 10,000 people. In less than four years, this number had grown to nearly 50,000. This would have been an impossible task for any energy or zeal less than his own. There were then practically no Catholic Chapels. The Shepherd had to seek out his sheep in the city lanes or in the hamlets scattered over dreary waste, or hid in deep wood, or clinging to the rough bleak side of the mountain. The Primate's care was deeply concerned not only for the Lambs, but also for the Sheep of his Flock. Those difficult days had created grave dangers for the discipline of the Clergy. Such rare evils as had resulted from these dangers, Dr. Plunket healed or hindered by wise laws made in frequent synods. These laws, so far from being resented by his Priests, were welcomed by them with such cordial acceptance and chivalrous loyalty, that in many meetings the united Clergy wrote letters to Rome, expressing their enthusiastic admiration for their Primate and their warm thanks to the Holy See for having given them so holy, wise, and zealous a Father in the Faith.

But the best men have enemies. The kindest hearts meet with bitterest hatred. Some few fallen Priests, criminals against the law of men, Apostates against the law of God, resented with such malignant

spite these successful measures for the sanctity of the Clergy, as not to abate their treacherous and inhuman hatred, until about twelve years afterwards they brought their holy Archbishop to the scaffold. Some men of narrow mind appear to think that a Priest cannot be a patriot nor a Bishop a statesman. Now, even independently of any direct or immediate influence on politics, its Priesthood may work greater good for a nation than its Parliament. A good State is only the outcome of the efforts of good citizens; but good citizens are only made out of good men. But again, religion alone can make good men. Furthermore, there are many ways in which the guidance of their spiritual Shepherd is needed for a people's full and true prosperity. Amongst these, there is no higher human help than education, and the advice or action of a Bishop in matters of education involves statesmanship. All this the great patriot and statesman, Oliver Plunket, clearly saw. He knew well the magnificence of the material at his hand. 'Irish talent,' he wrote, 'is excellent and acute, especially in Ulster.' He also knew the glorious traditions of the past. 'From Ireland,' St. Bernard wrote, 'as from an overflowing river, streams of holy men went forth to foreign nations.' The Saxon Aldhelm also wrote: 'Ireland is rich in the wealth of knowledge, and as thickly set with learned men as the heavens are with stars.' Dr. Plunket also knew the dangers of his actual day. The Protestant Penal Laws were of diabolical cunning and of diabolical depravity. Ignorance was enforced on Catholics. Only by apostasy against the God whose Faith they held could they buy education for their children. Dr. Plunket convinced



the Viceroy that true statesmanship should neither force the Catholics to sin by forswearing their Faith, nor yet force them by enforced ignorance to take refuge amongst the rebel and reckless Tories. Educated and conscientious Catholics would make good citizens. The Viceroy recognised this statesmanship, and not only gave his tacit consent but also financial aid to a Catholic College. But all the Catholic gentry, except three, had been robbed of their property. Dr. Plunket made superhuman efforts to supply the necessary moneys. He opened a College at Drogheda. Soon it held over 150 sons of the Catholic gentry, and the standard of education was so high that amongst the students were forty sons of the Protestant nobility. The College was under the care of three Jesuit Fathers, 'Men,' wrote Dr. Plunket, 'whose virtue, learning, and labours would suffice to enrich a kingdom.' The Jesuits—always, thank God ! ready to be a forlorn hope in periods of peril to the Church—had also Colleges in Dublin, Kilkenny, Ross, Wexford, Clonmel, Waterford, Cashel, Cork, Limerick, and Galway. But this success was, within four years, lost. Dr. Plunket, with 'an intense inward pain,' beheld his beloved College closed, when Lord Berkeley, the Viceroy, too statesmanlike a man for the bigotry and rancour of the Protestants, was replaced by the intolerant, although diplomatic, Ormond.

One last striking characteristic of Oliver Plunket as a great leader of men, was his broad-minded sympathy. A true patriot is not a partisan, and a great statesman is above the low level of mere party politicians. Strange as it may appear, in those days of intolerable Protestant bigotry and of intense Catholic resentment


against injustice, Dr. Plunket had many friends not only amongst the Protestant laity, but even amongst their ministers, not only amongst the adherents of the English Crown, but even amongst their high officials. This was too useful an excuse for calumny not to be eagerly seized upon by his enemies. Great characters always provoke the venom of mean men. Again and again was he accused at Rome of being traitor to his Church. On the other hand, ceaseless informations were sworn against him before the English Crown. What kind of men these informers were, we learn from a letter of the Viceroy, Ormond: 'These that went out of Ireland with bad English and worse clothes are returned well-bred gentlemen, well periwigged and well clad. Brogues and leather straps are converted to fashionable shoes and glittering buckles; which, next to the zeal which Tories, thieves, and Friars have for the Protestant religion, is a main inducement to bring in a shoal of informers. The worst is, they are so miserably poor that we are fain to give them some allowance; and they find it more honourable and safe to be a King's evidence than a cow-stealer, though that be their natural profession. Now that they are discarded by the zealous suborners of the city, they would fain invent and swear what might recommend them to another party; but, as they have not the honesty to swear truth, so they have not the wit to invent a probable story.'

Oliver Plunket was too great a man, too loyal a patriot, too exalted a statesman, to be moved by the whimperings of false friends, any more than by the howlings of open enemies. Those charges, as was his duty, he denied. 'He was not afraid for evil tidings.'

For his full justification he could look to the 'lasting remembrance of men.' As to his action, fearlessly and defiantly he encountered and overcame the heartless and lawless extortions of many Protestant ministers. Fearlessly and defiantly he refused to accept the ascendancy of parson or of Saxon. But he revered honest thought and sincere conviction wherever he met them amongst men ; and he never failed in his high esteem for justice, nor ever wavered in his worship for honour. He would do what was right, come what may. But, soon, the efforts of evil were for a while to obscure his glory, and the hatred of bad men was to triumph in his death.

Alone he stood in that great hall at Westminster, sacred to English justice ; alone, in the midst of the thick throng of his fierce and implacable enemies ; alone, masterful in the midst of mean men ; lion-like, in the midst of treacherous intrigue and snarling attack ; king-like, though captive ; a hero, unconquered at the moment of apparent defeat ; a Martyr, in his very disgrace and death victorious and triumphant. Alone stood Oliver Plunket, charged with high treason, before the Bar of the English Crown. He had no Counsel ; none was allowed. He had no witnesses ; those who could have made his innocence evident as the sunshine were unable on their journey from Ireland to arrive in time for the trial, nor would the Judge, in the name of Justice, wait some few days until they came. He had no proofs ; the records of the Irish Law Courts, proving the perjuries of his accusers, were denied to him by the Irish Judge, and the English Judge would not, without those very records, listen to his words. Alone he stood in the midst of an

English audience which did not want to hear the truth, but to whet its cruel curiosity and to glut its passionate prejudice. Alone he stood before a London Jury, whose wits, naturally dull, and preternaturally prejudiced, had been bewildered, dazed, hypnotised by the weird witchcraft of that cunning incantation, 'a Popish plot.' 'The proceedings of the Popish plot,' wrote the impartial Fox, 'are an indelible disgrace to the English nation. Witnesses, not deserving of credit in the most trifling cause upon the most immaterial facts, gave evidence so impossible to be true that it ought not to have been believed even if it had come from the mouth of Cato. Juries partook of the national ferment; and Judges were scandalously active in confirming them in their prejudices and inflaming their passions.'

Before such a Judge, Oliver Plunket stood alone. The charge against him was that he sought 'to establish and promote the Catholic Faith.' Other charges which, according to the Court itself, were subordinate and explanatory, were, that he had enrolled and supported 70,000 men to revolt against the King; that he was in constant correspondence with the French authorities; that he had chosen Carlingford Bay as the point for the French invasion; that he had sent soldiers to assassinate the King. These charges the Primate, with evident innocence and truth, denied; remarking, with calm irony, that all the wealth of Ireland could not support 70,000 soldiers, nor could all the Priests of all Ireland support 100 men, while the port of the Bay of Carlingford was about the worst point possible for any force to land. But of what use were the noble Primate's words?  Were

there not witnesses against him? Witnesses! Who and what were they? O God! Can it be true? Three chief witnesses: MacMoyer, Duffy, Murphy, apostate Priests, criminals already condemned for deeds of violence and of shame, jail-birds that had fled from Ireland to escape hanging, perjurers convicted of perjury by Protestant Juries in Dublin and in Dundalk, men false even to their own friends, informers against their own comrades, scoundrels, social scum of the filthiest sort, traitors to every cause, profaners of every tie, outcasts of every law, renegades to every truth. To them were added five strangers, who knew nothing of the Primate nor of his life. Upon such testimony, the London Jury found the prisoner guilty of high treason; and the Lord Chief Justice of England sentenced him to be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

Through the London streets was dragged the hurdle upon which lay bound the noblest figure of Europe. Up to the gallows he was led, looking, in the words of one of his fellow-prisoners, like 'an angel come down from Heaven, eager to return thither.' In his prison he had prepared himself for death by fasting three days a week on bread and water. His sentence, as he said himself, had not robbed him of ten minutes' sleep. He had asked to be buried with the Jesuit Fathers, and therefore was his mutilated body afterwards laid to rest amongst them in the Church of Saint Giles. Calm, serene, joyful, he gave thanks to God for the glorious privilege granted to him.

'Ireland,' he said, 'has many Saints; not many Martyrs.' Upon the scaffold he prayed aloud for the

King and people of England. He gave his full pardon to his enemies—a prayer which won for most of the very worst of these wretches God's pardon at their own death. 'No power,' he exclaimed, 'not only upon earth, but even in Heaven, can give me leave to make a false protest. Before the Bar of the King of kings, I declare mine innocence. I beseech Thy Divine Majesty, O my God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and through the intercession of His Blessed Mother and of all the holy Angels and Saints, to forgive me my sins and grant my soul eternal rest.'

Kneeling, with his eyes raised towards Heaven, he recited the *Miserere*, then breathed forth the all-hallowed death prayer of our great brother Christ: 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' One moment: Did the earth tremble or did the Heavens grow dark? Was there no justice amongst men, no avenging amongst the Angels? Oh! shame! shame! shame! Oh! horror! Oh! infamy! Oh! cruel, cruel, cowardice! Oh! murder of innocence! outrage of honour, blasphemy of the most holy God! One moment: The bolt is drawn; the body falls, maimed, mutilated, disembowelled; and, where the saddened soil blushes with his holy blood, lie the mangled remains of Oliver Plunket.

In that moment and from that spot, with a triumph of innocence that shall for ever abash the enemies of Truth and Honour, with an evidence of heroism that shall for ever rejoice the eyes of the just, up to the throne of God soars the soul of the Martyr Primate of Ireland. Oh! disgrace that is changed to glory! Oh! death that dies in the Resurrection of Life Eternal! Oh! Holy Primate! Oh! Martyr Hero! Be thou still

the Father of thine own Flock, the model of thine own children, the honour of thine own Oldcastle !

To-day we witness the dedication of your monument to your Hero. The bronze or marble statue that stands as artistic emblem and lasting evidence of a nation's gratitude, recalls to the generation of children, who ebb or flood away with the tides of a great city, the admiration and love of their forefathers. The statue's usefulness is in its beauty. The metal-moulder must obey the laws of ideal grace ; nor may the sculptor's stroke fail to call forth, from the marble that answers to his inspiration, a figure eloquent in its lifelike truth and touching in its breathing tenderness. Without its beauty the statue could not tell to the eye nor whisper to the heart the charm of its memory, the meaning of its message, or the enthusiasm of its motive. You have hearkened to a higher thought. You have not chosen to erect a statue to your Hero ; but to his memory you have more wisely and more nobly chosen to build a Palace for the King he served. Many a great name is recorded in Memorial Halls. What more befitting monument to a Saint than a shrine of holiness within which, intermingled with his memory, is also realised the ceaseless re-utterance of the teaching of his life and the actual working out of the one sublime motive that absorbed his soul ? Your memorial of your saintly Hero is a worthy tribute to our Martyr Primate, and it is a worthy Home for our Eucharistic King. Your Church is, therefore, a love-gift from his own kinsfolk in Keltic blood, and brothers in Catholic Faith, to your sainted fellow countryman and protector, the Martyr Oliver Plunket ; and, through him,

it is your love-gift unto God. Wherefore, your Church is an actual expression of your mind and heart. It is a word, spoken in strong stone and thrilling in lines that are beautiful, proclaiming to the world the steadfastness of your Faith and the charm of your love of God. You need pay no heed to those sad critics who rail against the costliness or the loveliness of your memorial Church. The sour or sordid economist who forgets that man is nobler than his food, and the soul's desire better than the body's comfort, has yet to learn from you that 'to make the universe only useful would be to rob the world of its highest use.' The materialist or the sensualist who pictures Ireland at the cross-roads must surely have forgot that Christ first spoke about these branching ways; and that, as Ireland has in the past trod the narrow road that leads to Heaven, she is little likely in the future, for the sake of Mammon, to take the broad, smooth, downward path that leads to Hell. Your Church tells that, as in the past, you have first sought it, so in the future will you still 'seek first the Kingdom of God.' Your Protestant critic does not understand that your Church is the 'Holy of holies,' a shrine full of sacred awe; for that within it really dwells, in true actual presence, Jehovah become Jesus. Judas was the first bad Catholic. He was the first to sneer at the extravagant love-gift of St. Mary Magdalen. He was also the first to groan with affected concern over our forgetfulness of the poor. Some years ago, on a hot day in summer, a traveller in a northern railway train was indignantly protesting against what he called the wasteful majesty and unproductive beauty of the Cathedral of Letterkenny.



As he spoke the massive links of his great, gold watch-chain—a bootlace would have been as useful although not as beautiful—the massive links of his great, gold watch-chain rose in responsive wrath or reposed in graceful coil of philanthropic calm over the undulating folds of a vast waistcoat whose capaciousness was not suggestive of fasting. When he had finished with the Cathedral, he told his friend of a magnificent mansion which he had just built for himself at the small cost of £12,000, and that he had managed to secure the most artistic architect and had manœuvred the best workmen at the lowest wage. While he is speaking the massive links of the great, gold watch-chain throb now in triumphant heave or wriggle in convulsive merriment. Was the rich fat man a cynic or a humbug? Was he fool or knave? If ever, or anywhere, there should be excessive extravagance in Church building, that is not the business of Materialist, Atheist, Novelist, Protestant, or bad Catholic: that is our own business. We can arrange our own affairs at home, in mutual friendliness and loving forbearance,—we, People and Priests of Catholic Ireland.

Your monument is not merely an outward expression of your admiration for your holy hero and of your devotedness unto God: it is also a mirror wherein is reflected the inward shrine of the Spirit within your soul. Like strong stones linked in solid wall, your lives are welded into one spiritual Brotherhood; and, as the stately Gothic arches lean in enduring helpfulness and touching sympathy to hold the stooping canopy of roof up towards Heaven, so your mutual efforts in a living Communion of Saints elevate your human nature to a height that is divine; and, as the pinnacles

pierce the sky, so do your prayers flash in the sunlight of the answering smile of God ; and, as, within your Church, your gold, your silk, your tenderest cambric and your fairest flowers are gathered in silent eloquence round the Tabernacle of our human-hearted God, so, within your soul, the dearest charm, the sweetest grace, the most delicate emotion, the most exquisite virtues and the purest aims are grouped, in adoring ornament and earnest beauty, round the Throne of the indwelling Spirit, who is the uncreated love of the Father and of the Son.

Yet one word more. Does not the glory of the Assumption, pictured by the inpouring sunlight upon your window, remind you of the lifting up to life, in the resurrection of Martyrdom, of her great Irish son who, in death, called upon her holy name ? Does not the window, enriched with the fair figure of our Irish Saint Brigid, remind you of his virgin-like innocence ? Does not the pictured window of our Irish Saint Patrick remind you of his Apostolic zeal, who was the son of your own soil, and the Saint of your own blood ? Do not the mountains of Loughcrew, amidst which your hero was born, remind you of hallowed-hiding places where your forefathers heard Mass ? and do they not warn you, with the silent solemnity of the everlasting hills, that you, sons of a Martyr nation, must be true to your Faith unto death ? Up above you, yonder, ' Sliabh-na-Caillighe ' stands, bearing upon its crest of 1000 feet the tomb of ' Ollamh Fodla,' the law-giver of the Ireland of old. Silently, from under its cloud crown, the mountain looks down upon Oldcastle. Silently, it stood there in the old, old days of early Ireland. Silently

it shall stand there still in the days of Ireland that are beyond the horizon of centuries. Silently it stands, but its silence is fraught with a meaning which no human eloquence could utter : a meaning which is echoed ever from the old days that are dead to men, and ever answered from the new days that to men are yet unborn ; a meaning eternal, changeless, all pervading ; the meaning, whether stammeringly repeated by reason or masterfully heralded by Revelation ; the meaning of a law which man must obey, the law of which man's highest aspirations and most heroic deeds are only the outcome or the fulfilment ; the law of Him who made the mountains and bade the sea to break its swelling waves ; the law of Him who set the stars and crowns the Saints ; the law of Him who was in the beginning, who yet in time became our human brother that He might dwell amongst us in the shrine which is our love-gift and His home. While ' Sliabh-na-Caillighe ' stands there like a sentinel of eternity, like a herald of the law of nature's lord, may the ceaseless blessing of our gentle Christ, the Lord of Love, through the prayer of our Martyr Primate, come upon us and rest upon us.

## CHAPTER V

### RUTH'S PROMISE : A PROPHECY <sup>1</sup>

*Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go : and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. The land that shall receive thee dying, in the same will I die : and there will I be buried.*—Ruth i. 16, 17.

MYSTERY follows from mystery. From the mysterious nature of God follows a mysterious fullness and a mysterious oneness in the things that have come from His hands. Everywhere in the physical world are uttered works that speak more plainly than words of the countless perfections of their Maker, yet everywhere the voices of nature unite in one hymn to the glory of the one God. Much more in the supernatural order, when the veil of God's own Home is almost lifted, echoes are heard of many mysterious truths that mingle together in one mysterious analogy ; and, by the light of Revelation, many mysterious images are seen which mirror both the infinite variety of the divine attributes and the simple oneness of God's life.

Again, this working out of unity in the multitude of mysteries is in keeping both with the nature of God and with the nature of man. It is suited to the

<sup>1</sup> Words spoken at the Clothing of Eileen Kane (in Religion), Sister Mary of St. John, Convent of the Holy Childhood, the Old Palace, Mayfield : Feast of Our Lady of Ransom, September 24, 1890.

nature of God in the magnificent out-pouring of His gifts in creation and in the masterful gathering of means unto one final end. It is suited to the nature of man in its gradual growth towards fulfilment and in its strange blending of material weakness with spiritual strength.

We are not, then, surprised to hear St. Paul proclaim that all things happened to the Israelites of old as figure of what was to come. We know that under the Old Testament men were saved by Hope. We know that Faith then looked only forward, that hearts lived by anticipated love, that the years were periods of waiting, that all God's messengers were prophets of the future, that all men's prayers were sighs for a promised boon. We know that the existence of the faithful people received all its spiritual life and warmth from the dawning glory of the Christ, and we know that this same light and warmth was reflected with varying tone and flickering changefulness from within each single Jewish soul.

It sounds, then, like a well-remembered lesson when we hear the Fathers and Theologians of the Church teaching that there is a triple analogy in the one vast prophetic life of the Old Testament. St. Thomas Aquinas, above all others, puts this plainly when he says that all the types and figures of old foreshadowed Christ, for He indeed was the very burden of their message. Yet they also foretold the life and destiny of the Church, for the Church is the mystic body of Christ, His Spouse, His other self, His moral reproduction in the life of man. Furthermore, those prophetic tokens spoke of what should happen within each single human soul ; for each soul is saved by being

made unto the likeness of Christ, by being drawn into living membership with Christ's body, and by being nurtured unto the perfect maturity and comeliness of Christ.

Thus, while at times the personal character of Christ is more directly drawn, or the constitution of His Kingdom more immediately described, or the nobility of some individual soul more prominently set forth, yet in all the pages of Holy Writ is mirrored the triple analogy which exists between Christ, His Church, and each soul ; between the King, His Spouse, and His Child.

In the story of Ruth we are told the tale of every human heart. We are told in simple words, which make our tenderest sympathies vibrate with past memories or present hopes, of those epochs of existence when some great choice is made : a choice such as explains the past and determines the future ; a choice not between evil and good, but between what is good and what is better ; a choice that leaves all that it loves less, for the sake of what it loves more ; a choice between all else beside, and one great love.

All the things which God has made, reflect the greatness and the goodness of their Maker. Each, in its own way, with fainter tone or fuller colour, with nobler form or lowlier shape, with loftier attribute or humbler use, is a realised type of something that is divine. Thus, while the material world is useful, it is much more than a mere means which the hand of man may put to profit. Even the material world has within it rays that are a reflection of eternal brightness, tones that are a record of eternal truth, charms and gifts that are a reproduction, however

faint and feeble, of eternal loveliness and worth. 'The heavens proclaim the glories of God.' Out of the unending blue flashes the glorious sunshine and men with glad faces look up towards Heaven, thinking of their Father there. Ever the bosom of the earth, where the blue waters of the majestic sea roll, or where the broad plains spread, or where the forests bend in whispering awe or rise in contemplative stillness, or where the mountains are lifted up like the very throne of Omnipotence, men look forth and behold a universe useful to them indeed, but in itself great and good and beautiful as well.

Much more in the moral world do we find true images and realised figures of the goodness of our good God. There have been characters good and thorough ; there have been deeds gentle and heroic ; there have been lives devoted and magnanimous ; there have been hearts loving and unfailing ;—all these worthiest attributes of human nature have that worth which consists in uplifting our thoughts towards Heaven, but they have this worth because they are no empty shadows or hollow light but real and sterling qualities worthy of men's esteem and love.

Most of all is God's Heaven truly mirrored in man's home. Listen to a deep and beautiful thought of St. John Chrysostom : 'God's love is so great a thing,' he says, 'that even Omnipotent Wisdom could find no one word or work to fitly utter or image in the world what the great Lover of men is towards a human soul. Wherefore our great good God was forced to tell us by different tokens something of what is only one within His love. So, in order to teach us what

the unwearied strength of His ever-watchful Providence is like, He gave us the love of a kind father ; and so, to teach us with what infinite tenderness He stoops towards us in our need, He gave us the love of a sweet mother ; and so, to teach us with what mysterious yearning He seeks to give us sympathy, He gave us the love of a gentle sister ; and so, to teach us with what exceeding devotedness He wishes to become our equal, by the cordiality of His friendship, and our superior only by the magnificence of His generosity, He gave us the love of an unselfish brother.'

Child ! child ! Who comest here to-day to leave thy crown of flowers, and the yet fairer crown of thy maiden tresses, before the altar of the King ? Who comest here to-day to beg that cloister gates may close upon thy life, leaving all the past outside ? Who comest here to leave all things which the world loves ? Child ! child ! I cannot tell thee that all these things are vain. I cannot say that the Heavens are not blue, nor can I bid thee think that the sunshine is not bright. I cannot chide thee in cold words if thou shouldst fancy that all the beauty thou hast seen on earth is still beautiful ; that all the fair scenes amidst which thy childhood wandered or rested are still fair. I cannot tell thee that the breezes which blew round thy latest home from the pine woods of the Pyrenees were not fresh with hope and fragrant with delight, nor that when the sun, robed in scarlet and crimson and gold, sank beyond the throbbing Atlantic, there was not before thine eyes a true picture of Paradise. Nay, I cannot tell thee that all these things are vain, for they are true and good and beautiful.

But if I should borrow the language of hard though



pious men, and praise the order and loveliness of lifeless nature yet lament that in the world of living hearts there is no constancy, no unswerving worth, no true and lasting love, but only selfishness, only coldness freezing into cynicism, or only fondness softening into sin ; if I should speak thus, there would appear before thy thought a face, calm with controlled depth of tenderness, quivering with outwelling of devotedness, serene with utter absence of self-seeking, yet lined and clouded with anxious care for thee ; and at the sight of thy Father's face thy whole soul would revolt against the falsehood that thou art leaving no great worth behind thee in thy home.

Or, yet again, if from my lips should fall such stern sentences as have been pronounced by men of sickly mind or soured heart, who say that all human love of life leads us away from God ; and whoso would climb perfection's arduous heights must fling away all thought or care for what is not divine ; then from thy full heart would burst a sobbing prayer, and all thy prayer would have within it the echo of thy mother's voice from whose sweet lips thou didst first hear of God, and all thy spiritual fervour would catch its fire from the warmth of thy mother's heart where first thou didst learn that ' God is love.'

Nay ! nay ! let all the dear old memories linger yet. Let all the dear, kind faces look upon thee still. Let all the loves that are part of thy heart throb within it while it lives. Harken to no heartless holiness. Listen to no inhuman creed. Thou art leaving the loved ones of thy home. But I dare not bid thee cease to love them. Nay ! I cannot bid thee love them less. No ! love them not less, but love God more.

When Ruth heard from her adopted mother that they should part, she lifted up her voice and wept, and cried, ' Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go : and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. The land that shall receive thee dying, in the same will I die : and there will I be buried.' It was not that Ruth loved not the land of her birth. She had not forgotten the memories of her childhood that were rooted in the spot where stood her home. She could not without sorrow say ' Good-bye ' to the friends midst whom she dwelt, nor could she without a pang weep for the last time over the grave of her beloved dead. The simple story of Ruth's words and acts proves her to have had all the greatness and all the tenderness of a noble woman's heart. But Ruth loved Noemi with so great a love as to draw her strongly yet sweetly from all that she loved less than the mother to whom she had given all her heart.

Human nature is weak in many ways, and of little worth. But in one way it is most noble and has a strength that is almost divine. There is a power within it which, when set forth, can change the meanest character into a hero, which can drain all selfishness from the narrowest soul, and which can make a man that was before a brute into the likeness of a pure protecting Angel. It is the strength of a great love. Now if this divine spark, even in its merely human type, can kindle hearts that were all worldly into a fire that burns away all foulness and tempers all goodness unto the brightness and the strength of steel, what must not its power be when it falls from the living love of God straight into the living love of an

angelic heart. Wherefore, however, we may speak of greatness in the world, we must come to realise at last that all greatness which is not the greatness of hate or of Hell is the greatness of a mysterious motive which makes men like unto God ; this is love.

In the bud and promise of thy youth and gifts there was a pledge of happy human life, sheltered in a happy home, brightening into happier hope, crowned by love and blessed by God. But this is not enough for thee. Thou hast heard a dearer voice. Thou hast felt a holier love.

St. John tells us that ' God is love.' In the eternal fullness of that love there was an incomprehensible longing to give love. The love that is divine made a love that is human. God made man. But man would not love and so became estranged from God. But God's love uprose and poured forth in an exhaustless torrent of tenderness, until in the words of St. Paul ' God did bring Himself to naught,' ' God did empty Himself,' until God wedded His own divine nature unto our own human clay, until Omnipotence was held in the hand of a Child, until uncreated Charity throbbed in a Child's heart, until the God of love was incarnate in the human love of Christ. This Child is thy love.

From out of the far distance, this Child stretched forth His arms to thee. Through all the long lapse of ages, this Child's voice echoed in thine ear. Now, in thy very heart and soul, this Child breathes a sacred message and whispers a divine call. He asked thee, years ago, not indeed to love others less, but to love Him more ; and thou, deep in thy heart, with all thy

heart, didst answer saying: 'Whithersoever Thou shalt go, I will go: and where Thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and Thy God my God. The land that shall receive Thee dying, in the same will I die: and there will I be buried.'

Through thy years of waiting, this answer was uttered in the silence of thy heart. To-day at last the hour has come when thy heart's answer may speak from thy lips aloud before Heaven and before Earth. Now, thou canst indeed say to Christ, 'Withersoever Thou shalt go, I will go.' Yes! in truth, He left His home, He left His own most sweet Mother for thy sake; and thou, for His dear sake, hast left thy people, thy land, thine own place by the fireside. Henceforth thou followest Him. Hereafter, with the chosen band thou 'shalt follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' Yet, even now, being His handmaid, thy steps must follow His. As Ruth followed the path of the reapers, gleaning the corn they had left, so, wherever Christ in His Priesthood passes, thou shalt also pass, gathering with woman gentleness and sympathy souls which otherwise would not have been brought to the golden harvest of God.

'Where Thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell.' Within the very walls sacred to His honour, under the very roof-tree which shelters Him, near the very Tabernacle where His mysterious Presence reposes in silent love, there thou shalt nestle close, day and night, to our Eucharistic King 'under whose wings thou hast flown.'

'Thy people shall be my people.' Thou hast found a place amongst a sisterhood, who, with bright heroism and happy earnestness, unite their pure souls

and warm hearts, to make God's Will done on earth as it is in Heaven. Religion is no dull life of sickly ease or useless dreaming. Neither is it a life of blighted hopes, of cold cynicism, of stern, unfeeling, relentless crushing out of sympathy. No! Religion is the very home where the fullness of the Gospel of peace abides, and where, most of all, God's law of love reigns in secure triumph. Thus, Sisters, not indeed by blood or material ties, but by the immaterial bonds of charity, your whole life is one harmonised earnestness, of work prompted and carried out by one Christ-like motive in which there is both the serene vigour of angelic souls and the warm feeling of human hearts.

'Thy God shall be my God.' Do not think that Ruth's love was of such wild kind as to make her even forswear the God whom she had adored, for the sake of the Mother whom she worshipped. No! but Ruth had learned from Noemi to know God in a truer and different way. Thus, new knowledge of the God of love had made Him in a sense another God for her, the God of Noemi. Thy God is not the God who spoke in thunder to Israel, nor the God whose awfulness abode in the Temple of the East. Nor, in this sense, is thy God even as the God of the Christians, a Father in kindness, a Brother in sympathy, a Friend in devotedness, a Redeemer. Nay! thy God is more to thee. Thy God is other to thee. Thy God is Jehovah; thy God is Christ. More! more! more! thy God is thy Spouse. Mysterious dignity! Sacred happiness! No thought of Angel could fitly represent what is bound up in that word. We can only bow down in reverent gratitude, wondering at and worshipping these mysterious Espousals, in

which a virgin's life and heart and love are plighted to the Virgin Christ.

'The land that shall receive Thee dying, in the same will I die, and there will I be buried.' This union of love is a love that is united in life and in death. I said but now that there is much upon earth that is good and lovable. But all these things must pass away. As the green buds of Spring must fade in Autumn, and strew the hard Winter soil with dead fibre, so the generations that come and go must rise and fall, flower and decay, live and die, love and part. The eyes of the aged are closed by their children, and these again grow old and pass away. There is no fireside that has not sad memories of vanished faces. Hands that have been clasped are wrenched asunder. Heart is torn from heart. All is a prelude to death. 'Good-bye' is an echo from the tomb. Even the tenderest tie that joins two human hearts together with the blessing of Our Father in Heaven, even that sacred giving and receiving of whole-hearted devotedness of life, even the union made at the Altar is only made 'until death doth them part.' There is only one love that is eternal: it is the love of Christ. Those who love Him are buried as they die with Him; but He has changed their death to slumber, and in His Resurrection He will give again with life the resurrection of their love. 'Christ dieth no more.' His love is ever living. Thy love, too, shall live for ever, for thou art His in life, in death, for ever.

Eileen! Eileen!—Let me call thee once more, and for the last time, by the dear old name,—Eileen! Take this step nobly, with all thy heart. There is a

great life before thee. It is a life simple enough for a child, yet loving enough for God. With all the simplicity of a child, and with all the devotedness of thine own great heart, bring thy flowers to the feet of Christ. Give the promise of thy budding years to Him. Take from thy head thy rippling luxury of hair. Put from thee thy robe of beauty, even the robe thy mother wrought. Then, give thy hand to Christ. Thou shalt be pledged to Him, in plighted troth, for life, for death, for resurrection and for ever. Christ is pledged to thee, and when hereafter thou shalt meet Him coming to welcome thee to thy home of Heaven, thou shalt have a sacred right to ask Him, whose ring shall be upon thy finger, to give thee back what thou hast left for Him, the loves of the old home.

Hereafter, only, shall it be given us to understand the mysterious leading up from mystery to mystery, until sacrifice is linked with love and love with sacrifice; until all must be left in order to be found again; until with open eyes we gaze upon the unveiled beauty of the Godhead incarnate in our loving Christ.

## CHAPTER VI

### GOD'S WORD INCARNATE IN HUMAN SPEECH <sup>1</sup>

*As the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater ; so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.—Isaias lv. 10, 11.*

THERE is a marvellous unity among God's many works. All the various voices of creation echo one hymn. All the multitudinous forces of matter combine into one movement. All the fair forms of the earth, all the tender tints of the heavens, in endless variety of excellence, in ever-changing rapture of tone, with a difference that is never discordant, with a likeness that is never monotonous, with a truth that is always a new Revelation, with a mystery that is always the same, reflect one beauty.

Thus the light that thrills through the all enfolding ether, the sound that breaks upon the circumambient air, and the tidal throb of the heart of the

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Opening of a new Pulpit in the Church of the Discalced Carmelite Friars, St. Teresa's, Clarendon Street, Dublin, February 5, 1899.



ocean, obey the same law of the wave whose ripples rise into one full impulse that passes, and leaves them to sink, and fall, and pause upon the silent shore, and die.

Much more, in the new Creation of the Christ, do we behold a unity, a strength, a beauty that is divine, from within whose living bud spring strange contrast of branching doctrine and strange analogy of kindred truth.

Thus, the Word that is eternal was uttered by the Father in the fullness of divine life. That Word was uttered in human form and feature, when the 'Word was made Flesh.' This Word is uttered still in human speech, when the Spirit breathes through the accents of the preacher, and its echoed wisdom becomes incarnate in the voice of man.

Wherefore, my dear Brethren, I will ask you to reflect, for some short while, with me, upon the divine and human elements in the Spoken Word. May God, in His kind mercy, grant that His Word fall, like the soft rain from heaven, upon our soul, and 'that it return not void, but prosper in the thing whereto He sent it.'

Have you ever stood by the shore of the sea, and watched its waves as they rose in a tumult of triumph, then broke with the surf of their conflict and roar of their wrath, then sank back away to the depths with a sigh of despair? Did not the message of the ocean, through the splash of its spray and the sound of its waves, speak to your soul? Generation after generation, like the waves of the sea, comes and goes; men rise and fall, are born and disappear.

As each generation comes, it rushes forward with

the same eagerness towards the same object as the generation gone before. It grasps at the same gold, or gluts itself with the same pleasure ; it laughs with the same joy, or moans with the same sorrow ; it climbs up to the same honour, or is trampled on by the same disgrace ; it exults with the same hope, chatters with the same fear, basks in the same love, or writhes under the same hate. To it, as to all, is borne, through its clamour of an hour on its shifting sand of space, the warning of eternal Wisdom : ' All these things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on, and as a ship that passeth through the waves, whereof, when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters ; or as when a bird flieth through the air, of the passage of which no mark can be found, but only the sound of the wings beating the light air and parting it by the force of her flight ; she moved her wings and hath flown through, and there is no mark found afterwards of her way ; or as when an arrow is shot at a mark, the divided air presently cometh together again, so that the passage thereof is not known ; so we also being born forthwith cease to be.'

Men hear, but hearken not, until as they, too, are left on the bleak shore alone, they re-echo, with wail and woe, the warning lament of every generation gone before to every generation that follows ; ' Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.'

But through the gloom that hangs over human life breaks a ray of hope from Heaven, and a voice from another world calms the tempest that troubles its waters. To those that sit under the shadow of death, to those that fain would feed their hunger with husks of swine, to those that have sinned as

David or suffered as Job, to all whose thirst is only mocked by water that wets the lip but cannot appease the fever of the soul, God, by His Prophet, calls : ' Ho ! everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come and buy without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread ; and you labour for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself. Incline your ear, and come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live.'

What is this bread from Heaven, this water from the everlasting hills ? We have our answer from the Word made Flesh. It is Himself uttered in human form. ' Not by bread alone doth man live, but by every word that cometh from the mouth of God.'

The cloud may bring its draught to water the thirsty seed, and the sun its warmth to ripen it ; the snow may spread its soft mantle over the slumbering soil in the winter, and the breeze in the springtide may dry the clay and freshen the air ; the earth may grow golden in summer with sturdy corn, and the trees in the autumn bend low with their luscious fruit ; the slow kine may fatten in the field, and the swift birds throng the wood ; Nature may give him bread to eat ; but, were the wide world a garden for his pleasure, and a storehouse for his food, man must hunger still.

He may learn the mysteries hid in mines of matter or the secrets shrouded in caves of ocean ; he may read the record of the rock or unravel the texture of the tree ; he may understand the laws that rule the lightning or the changefulness of the sea ; he may

catch the tiniest wave of ether, imprison the thin passage of a sound, or he may watch with accurate measurement the titanic mass and tremendous movement of the unending universe of the stars ; he may gather facts of every form, and garner them into sciences of every kind ; he may thrive in knowledge until his mind is filled with intellectual food ;—but, though he had touched all the facts of the earth, and tested all the theories of the heavens, man must hunger still.

The bread of corn feeds the body ; the bread of knowledge feeds the mind : they cannot stay the craving of the soul. They may give the strength of a brute or the power of a demon ; but God alone can turn man's strength to noble service, or guide man's power to noble aim.

Nay : without absolute truth and infinite worth, the mind must grow weary of its wonder, and the will dissatisfied with its search. Truth that is partial, and worth that is passing, feed, but do not fulfil, the soul's desire. It can only travel through time, that it may rest in eternity. It craves for a light that has no shadow. It pants for a worth that has no flaw. Aye ! he may drink till time be done, and eat till creation crumble ; but, when the finite is exhausted, man must hunger still.

Therefore doth God call : ' Incline thine ear, and come unto Me ! Hear ! and thy soul shall live.' Man's destiny is a life divine, with absolute truth to stimulate, yet satisfy, his hunger ; with infinite worth to arouse, yet allay, his thirst ; a life active to its repose, and, in its energy, restful.

Now, the Word made Flesh has all that earth can

offer to attract, and all that Heaven can give to crown the soul. But the Revelation of the Word made Flesh is incarnate only in its preaching. Therefore did Saint Paul exclaim : ' A necessity lieth upon me, for woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.' For as Saint Paul himself explains : ' Faith is through hearing. But, how shall they hear without a preacher ? ' Mark, then, Brethren, that while by many human ways man may reach to knowledge of Christ's Revelation, the one way by which this is divinely done is through the Spoken Word. Atheists have understood our doctrine from the study of the Scriptures, and pagans have admired our morality in the example of our Saints ; but God's grace, in its direct, normal, natural action, works upon the Christian mind and heart through the human accents of the preacher.

Behold the divine element in the Spoken Word ! It is Christ's Revelation ; not stinted in scattered crumbs, but put forward in full abundance ; not jealously measured in shallow streams, as if none of the audience should hear more than the dumbest can learn, but let flow in deep torrent of truth, like the preaching of Paul or the parables of Christ ; not flung out with ignorant indolence, as if the Faith of a child were enough for a man, or as if, in our days of intellectual war, your mind did not need stronger food than the simple unsuspecting, unsophisticated, unassailed Faith of your grandmother ; but, by study and reasoning and care, broken, as a father breaks the bread for his little ones, that the souls which hunger for Justice may be filled with the bread of their Father in Heaven.

Brethren, murmur not if, in the unfolding of Revelation, you meet with mysteries which require profound meditation ; nor shrink, with intellectual laziness, from earnest effort to understand, when the preacher gives you the solid food of maturity, the only strength of your Faith in our infidel century—the arguments, namely, which shall enable you ‘to give a reason for the Hope that is in you.’ Thus only can you worthily receive the divine element in the Spoken Word.

As the Eternal Word became incarnate in a human body, so the Wisdom of God becomes incarnate in the speech of man. The human element in the Spoken Word should be perfect, and it should be personal.

The Doctors of the Church hold, as an axiom above all attack, that ‘Christ possessed every physical excellence not incompatible with the aim of His Incarnation.’ Now, the aim of the Incarnation was, indeed, to redeem the human race, and bring men help from Heaven. It was, also, to win men to take that help. Wherefore, as His mind was enriched with human knowledge far beyond what we His lesser brothers have, and, as from His lips flowed an eloquence sweeter as well as more sacred than mortal ear had ever heard, so, too, a majesty, a comeliness, a beauty, shone forth from His Face, such as ‘eye hath never seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.’ Wonder not, then, that the Church applies to Him the words of Psalm xliv. : ‘Thou art beautiful above the sons of men ; grace is poured abroad in thy lips ; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.’

What is proved by *a priori* reasoning, is strengthened

by historic fact. Portrait-painting was much practised in the Augustan age, and Saint Luke, himself an artist, is said to have painted the likeness of Our Lord. It is beyond all doubt that some, who had seen the Christ, traced His image upon wall or glass or canvas for many others who had also looked upon His living Face, who therefore would tolerate no picture of it that was not true. Some of these, and other subsequent likenesses, while showing devout feeling, show the untutored hand. Yet, all, as even the clumsiest pencil may, preserve one distinct type—a type reproduced in its chief traits throughout the history of Art, even though varied by national character or personal taste as in some masterpieces of Raphael, Velasquez, or Vandyke.

The forehead high and broad; the eyebrows arched; the line of feature Grecian; the mouth small and firm; the chin resolute yet not harsh; the moving sheen and shadow of His hair, which, parting in rippling streams from above the middle of the stately head, flow in long silk-like folds about the oval outline of the face; the beard unshorn, full, divided; the eyes large, wide, lit from within their sacred source with the glory of His Godhead and the sympathy of man, revealing strange sweet mysteries of majesty, of awe, of beauty, and of still more mysterious love.

Yes, just as the Revelation of His truth was a stumbling-block and a scandal to narrow Jew and brutal Pagan, until they came to understand the nobility of its dogma and the purity of its law; so, too, the Man of Sorrows, bloodstained, besmeared with spittle, disgraced with whips, and crowned with

thorns, seemed to sensuous Greek and rough Roman, only a thing to shudder at, until, when they had learned what love had laid Him low, they came, with clearer truth and purer vision, to recognise, through tear and wound, the reflected beauty of His Mother's face.

Beautiful, as was that Face, should also be the ideal in the preacher's mind of the human form in which he seeks to clothe the sacred Word of God.

Yea ! he must know, as none other can, his own unworthiness, his utter unfitness for the task, and, stammeringly, as did Jeremias, cry : ' Ah ! ah ! ah ! Lord God ! Behold ! I cannot speak ; for I am a child.' And the Lord said to me : ' Say not, I am a child. For, thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee ; and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak.'

First, the truth that he must tell appears before him with the faint far outline of distant hills, yet opening gradually strange vistas to his view, with nearer path to follow, and closer field to till ; but soon, like the first ray of dawn over the mountains, like the first rustling of the rising breeze in the forest, it comes, not now before him, but upon him, no longer a distinct thought, but a living vision whose splendour floods its light within his mind, revealing iridescent heights of soaring principle and dazzling depths of meditative wisdom, penetrating his inmost being with actual sense of the supernatural, transfusing his very life with the thrill of a touch divine, until, illumined by an inspiration not his own, a sacred enthusiasm carried him onward, in the uncontrollable strength of its vivid emotion, ' to exult like a giant to run his way,' now bowed down in humble astonishment at the magnificence of the



mysteries that transport himself out of himself ; now lifted up in delight and wonder and awe to welcome the entrancing ideas that come thronging around him ; now turning up eyes of thanksgiving to behold the beauty of form and rhythm and colour and music that awaken to answer his call ; weaving unconsciously words into measures that echo the song of his soul ; shaping the phrase that it fit his conception ; grouping the sentences into the order that guides his thought forward ; catching what is fairest to eye and most melodious to ear to image the type that enraptures his fancy ; breathing into his speech the Spirit that breatheth upon him, until the light and the love of his vision become incarnate in language, and from out of the fullness of his heart, with the conviction of sight, with the earnestness of ecstasy, in passionate pathos and prophetic power, bursts forth to his lips, the human utterance of his divine message unto men.

In proof of what I hold, that nothing is too beautiful to be the material shrine of the divine word, I appeal to the true Catholic instinct which has prompted the offering of this Pulpit. As Christian nations have toiled through centuries to build a home for God ; as they have thought no Cathedral too magnificent to shelter His Presence ; no gold too pure to hold His blood ; no silk too rich to clothe His priest ;—so, those amongst you here, whose Christian principles have been purified by their Christian temperance, have thought no marble too rare, no carving too delicate, no art too exquisite, for the Pulpit from which your holy Carmelite Fathers shall preach the Word of God. To their true instinct I appeal ; should not the Spoken Word itself be beautiful ?

The Spoken Word should be personal. The Body of the Word made Flesh was no mere garment for use and wear, to be afterwards changed or set aside : it is living part of His living Self. So the preacher is not a mere channel through which may pass the thoughts of other men ; nor is he a mere machine to make God's teaching into new shape. But, as when the same sweet melody thrills through many instruments, its truth of note is quite unchanged, yet oh ! what strange delicious difference between the strong clear resonance of the brass, the luted softness of the whispering wood, and the entrancing tenderness of the subtly sounded string !—so, when the Spirit breathes, ' It breathes as It listeth, and thou knowest not whence It cometh, nor whither It goeth. So is it with every man that is born of the Spirit.' So was it with the artistic eloquence of Chrysostom and the sedate style of Basil ; with the rugged strength of Jerome, the graceful fancy of Augustin, and the enthusiastic poetry of Bernard ; with the soaring oratory of Bossuet, the polished plainness of Bourdaloue, and the clear melody of Massillon ; with the picturesqueness of Lacordaire ; the finish of Félix, and the majesty of Monsabré ; so again, was it with the unrivalled excellence of Newman's writing, as it was with the power and pathos of that great son of Saint Dominic, whom we ourselves, only some short years ago, have known and loved and lost.

Wherefore, it is only the Puritan or the Sentimentalist, only the stupid or the silly, only the narrow ascetic or the uncouth pedant that would wish to make all preachers imitate one style of speech or copy the same type of oratory.

Brethren, with one word I have done. 'As the rain cometh down, and the snow, from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.' Oh! may the word which I have feebly tried to utter bear with it such sweet soft dew divine, as shall make your very deepest heart bring forth and bud the love of the Word made Flesh. God, He can satisfy you: Man, He can attract. All light is in His wisdom: all love is in His Heart. Follow no strange myth, no dream, no shadow. Believe in your Incarnate God. Hope in your human-hearted King. Love your beautiful Christ. Let all your life be centred there, your most spiritual aspiration, your most trivial thought. Nothing that touches you is too great or too small for Him that loves you—yea! that loved you first and that loves you most. Ah! trust Him a little longer. Trust Him a little more. Trust Him in your triumph, in your trial, in your gladness, in your grief—aye, even in your sin. He pities you as He pitied the Prodigal. He will forgive you, as He forgave the Magdalen. He is your most dear Redeemer. He is your sweet Saviour. He is your good Shepherd. He is your kind, your most merciful, your gentle Christ. He is Jesus.

## CHAPTER VII

### *THE GREATER EMANCIPATION* <sup>1</sup>

'WHO fears to speak of 'ninety-eight?' The words are electric. The thought that is in them is no mere quiet ray that breaks like the dawn and disappears like the sun-down. But, like the power that hurls the clouds to crash with the horror of war and the havoc of death, it is the flashing forth, in a fury of fire and in a force of thunderbolt, into lightning-like expression of the concentrated, repressed, yet defiant energies of enthusiastic Irish souls.

The songs of 'the Spirit of the Nation' have indeed the music of true poetry, and the emotion of true patriotism; but alas! that music is often marred by discordant sounds of vindictiveness, and that emotion has been tarnished by passionate appeals to violence. Yet, we must remember that these songs were the echoes of an agony writhing under the wounds of cruel wrong; they were the despairing cry of a hope almost stifled by the fangs of unjust oppression. Thus, however much we may lament the expression of unholy hate which jars within those songs, however much we may deplore the mad

<sup>1</sup> Address at the Father Mathew Celebration, delivered in the Assembly Rooms, Cork, October 10, 1899.

blunder of a Rebellion, which, without human possibility of success, flung the nation back under a still more pitiless code of exasperation, into still tighter chains of slavery, we do not fear to recognise the sincere patriotism of those men of 'ninety-eight, while with our whole heart we sympathise with their love of our Fatherland. 'Who fears to speak of 'ninety-eight?' Not you nor I!

Freedom, then, is my theme to-night. I will speak to you about the Freedom of hand and foot, which is the Freedom from outward chain; about the Freedom of mind, which is the Freedom from bond of ignorance; and about the Freedom of the will, which is the Freedom from inward fetter, and in which consists the fuller and greater Emancipation of the man and of the nation.

Freedom is man's Birthright. The kine that fatten in the field or the horses that pull the plough, the dog that guards the homestead, or the stag that roams the plain, the bird that spreads its wings from the wood to wander through the ways of the air, or the fish that sleeps in ocean cave and travels the paths of the sea—these are man's servant creatures; their work, their repose, their life, their death, are for his use at his command. But man has no owner. His work he may barter for wage. He may give the labour of his hand or the toil of his brain for recompense. He may forfeit his earnings for right of reward. But his soul is his own; his life his Creator's. He may not be made, himself, a thing of use, an instrument of profit, or a means towards any end less than absolute. Child of his Father-God, upon his immaterial soul is stamped, in characters that

are indelible, a likeness that is divine. The Angels, sister Spirits, are his equals ; men, his brothers ; above him, only his Father-God. Man has no owner. Freedom is his Birthright.

Yet, while man's life cannot become the property of another, nor can the Birthright Freedom of his will cease to be his own, the outward Freedom of hand and foot may yield, through his own misdemeanour, to lawful constraint ; or, through violence, it may be overpowered by unjust assault.

In reading the chronicles of other days your heart will have thrilled with sympathy for the victim and with horror for the despot, when you beheld, as your fancy followed the story, the manacles of guilt clinging to hands that were innocent, and the fetters of a felon fastened round feet that had only walked by noble ways. But, when you read the tale of chivalrous, devoted, defiant patriots, brave men and true, who fought and fell in fierce though vain endeavour to free their country from a foreign foe, your very soul will writhe within you, in torture of helpless rage, with tear of helpless sorrow, to see Freedom buried in the tomb of a dungeon and heroes clutched in the grasp of a gibbet.

Judge them not harshly, those men of 'ninety-eight. Look upon the picture painted in blood and fire upon their brain. A nation robbed of its fields ; hurled, with satanic gibe, ' to Connaught or to Hell,' while the cow grew fat over the graves of its murdered dead, and the sheep lazily loitered where its children were starving ; the home of fond hearts levelled to the dust or smouldering into blackened cinders ; the babe borne bleeding on the point of the bayonet ;

the pure virgin shamed in the open street. Judge them not harshly, those men of 'ninety-eight, when they flung their broken hearts against the steel of the Saxon. They failed ; and Freedom was imprisoned in stronger chain.

But the Spirit of Freedom could not be held by bolt or bar. It entered into the heart of a Samson. The shackles of servitude were snapped like threads, and the penal laws torn to flimsy tatters by the giant-like mind and will of Daniel O'Connell. That was the first Emancipation.

In the days of persecution, while fetters clasped our Nation's hand and foot, the Irish mind was walled up within the dim, dank dungeon cells of ignorance. The despot knows that education is his enemy. In the victory of Catholic Emancipation, the outward barriers were broken down that held us back from the Gates of Wisdom. But our task-masters, foiled in attack, tried a stratagem. They had denied us a knowledge that we needed : now, they offer a knowledge that we do not want. They had denied us the Alphabet lest we should learn the Catechism : now, they offer us learning that is irreligious. They call this Freedom of thought, Reason untrammelled by Faith. Now, what do they really understand by Freedom of thought ? Do they mean that one may hold a principle to be true, not from argument, proof, or conviction, but merely for pleasure or for profit ? Do they mean that we may believe what we like just because we like it ? Scarcely ! Do they mean that thought should be only led by truth ? That is true. But it is not true that thought will find the truth, unless its Freedom be protected. Is it the Freedom

of a child, abandoned to stray near the precipice that is hidden by brambles and to dabble in the stream that shelves into sudden pool ; or, is it the Freedom of the young mind that is free to follow the guidance of a friend whose wisdom shall warn it against pitfalls that it cannot know, and whose hand shall lead it, not with bandaged eyes indeed, but with open intelligence, by paths where, while it can reach to the right understanding of the mysteries of matter and of the secrets of the stars, it is still free to enter into the world of supernatural wisdom, where God's own knowledge dwells. Truth cannot contradict truth. Revelation cannot fetter reason. It frees it from falsehood. Safeguard against error is no bond on science. Unguarded science becomes the slave of sense. This, then, is the Freedom which we claim : Freedom from the superstitions of science, Freedom from the dogmatism of doubt, Freedom from the poisoned shafts of atheistic spleen. What false Freedom of thought leads to, we learn from the newspaper. Infidel France has exiled from its schools the Christian Brother and the Nun. Its Freedom of thought means tyranny over truth and virtue. Its children now grow up free from Religion, free from Morality. It is reaping its reward in the satanic desecration of its Churches and in the approaching Cataclysm of its Commune. We are free to study in the dissecting-room of mere material science. We are free to learn by artificial light, in the dark-chamber of mere human discovery, whatever knowledge earth can give. But we want to be free to also enjoy the happy sunshine of Heaven. We will not give up the intellectual treasures of two thousand years. God



has shown us His truth. We will not be blinded to it by ignorant Atheist or arrogant Agnostic. We claim our Catholic University as an Emancipation from error.

There is a greater Emancipation still—Freedom from bondage of the soul. Do you not know that the will may be untrammelled though there be manacles upon the hand, and that, while the foot is grasped by the fetter, the soul may be unsubdued? Do you not know that the slave who is defiant may be more noble than the task-master who wields the lash? Do you not know that, though the body be bound by iron bolt or fastened to iron bar, the Spirit may be free?

No! no! the Spirit that is within us cannot be held in the grasp of material constraint, nor can it be driven by any force that is of earth. It is beyond the reach of gravitation. It is outside the influence of the tide. It may be motionless in the midst of the cyclone, or active in the midst of motionless oceans of ice. Nor can one man seize upon another's will; no! nor Angel.

Plainly: the Freedom of our hand or foot is only the Freedom of our outward and material life. It is noble, and to be nobly prized—prized above life. Yet its loss leaves us no less true men. But the Freedom of our will—this is indeed our Birthright. Our will is free, unless we sink to the level of willing slaves.

Hence, a man may be admirable even though he be the bondsman of violence; but that man is always contemptible who is the bondsman of circumstance. We can understand that a true man may be over-

powered by force from without ; but we cannot understand that a man should allow his will to drift according to the ebb or flow of accident or of impulse. You remember Hamlet to Horatio :

Blest are those  
Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,  
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee, [Horatio].

Aye ! to be passion's slave—that, indeed, is to be a slave. That is the bondage of the soul. Wretched of a truth is the man who weakly answers, with submissive soul, to every touch of Fortune's finger. But doubly wretched and worthless the man who wickedly answers, with depraved will, to every throb of brutal feeling. Bondage to the despot is less hateful, less shameful, less appalling, than bondage to the beast. To allow the fumes of alcohol to blot out the vision of the mind, to allow the impulse of a diseased appetite to overmaster the lordship of the will, to allow the thirst of a sottish brute to dictate to the reason of the man—this is to allow the animal to enslave the Spirit, matter to imprison mind, sense to tyrannise over soul ! This is bondage ! This is drunkenness ! Drunkenness is bondage of the soul. O Spirit of Father Mathew ! noble champion of true Freedom, look down from thy calm Heaven upon this poor land thou still dost love. In pity, breathe thy sacred courage within our Irish hearts that we may

break the chains of drunken vice, and achieve the greater Emancipation of the Soul !

Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land !—  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,  
As home his footsteps he hath turned  
From wandering on a foreign strand ?  
If such there breathe, go,—mark him well ;  
For him no minstrel raptures swell :  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth, as wish can claim,  
Despite those titles, power and pelf,  
The wretch concentrated all in self,  
Living shall forfeit fair renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonoured and unsung !

Is the spirit of 'ninety-eight dead ? Behold ! a tyrant has enthralled your country. He wrings from your impoverished people a tax of eighteen millions a year. He robs the workman of his wage. He steals the tradesman's earnings. He squanders the savings of the thrifty, and he drags the wealthy down to want. By every wayside you can see the cottages that he has left roofless, and amidst the trees the mansions that he has wrecked. He has flung the bone and sinew of your race abroad into exile to break stones for New South Wales or to sweat over the pickaxe for America. Those who remain at home he huddles into hovels of starvation and squalor ; or he crowds them into magnificent workhouses, madhouses, prisons, reformatories, Magdalen asylums. He seizes on the

man, mutilates him, cripples his strength, unnerves his hand, blotches his face, brutalises his eye, maddens his brain, dries up his heart, damns his soul. He seizes upon the woman, sours her meekness, corrupts her modesty, and drives her out into the street screaming like a fury, or he entices her like an animal into dens of shame. The children? When he does not kill them in childhood, he brings up the lads to be cornerboys and the girls to be . . . ! O sad, sad fate! He does what England could not do: he undermines our Faith, defiles our purity, and makes our name a bitter jest, a disgrace before the nations. Awake! awake! men of 'ninety-eight! Rise from your graves, and breathe your spirit into the manhood of our Nation that we break the bondage and trample on the chains of the demon-despot, Drink! Up, lads, for the honour of Ireland! Up, lads, for Freedom!

Over and over again it has been said by men of every party colour and of every political bias; over and over again it has been recognised by friend and by enemy, by sympathetic worshipper and by malignant critic, by the traitor tempter and by the devoted lover of sad, sweet, darling Erin that the faults or the mistakes or the sins of her children are to be all traced to one weakness. Were that one pitiful, wretched, deplorable weakness once removed, there would be no chill upon her moral atmosphere, no cloud across her moral sky. If in Ireland there were no intemperance, there would be no other slavery to sin. There would be the Greater Emancipation of the soul.

Father Mathew did it once. He worked, as Dan O'Connell said, 'a mighty moral miracle.' Hear

what the Liberator said of the Apostle at a great public meeting: 'I should feel ashamed of myself if I were capable of thinking that any words of mine could enhance the merit of such a man. The name of Father Mathew is a spell-word. It expresses in itself the advance of temperance, of morality, of prudence, and of every social virtue.' That name is a living influence still. It lives in those saintly and devoted Friars, brothers of Father Mathew and heirs to his Mission. It has found actual expression in the Church erected to his memory. It will soon, please God, find fuller utterance in a worthy Temperance Hall. That influence is living still in your own recollection of your Country's tears and in your aspiration for your Country's Freedom.

Look out over the battle-field! You have not now to face the penal law, but the publican's licence. Is the publican friend or foe?

You remember how, during the late Frontier War, English merchants were found who sold arms to shoot down English soldiers. You remember how, during the Franco-Prussian War, French merchants supplied, to their own soldiers, sawdust instead of bread, paper instead of leather, sand instead of gunpowder. There are Irishmen who make, and who sell to Irishmen poison instead of Whiskey. Good Whiskey is poison when taken to excess. Bad Whiskey is poison if touched at all—a poison which not merely for the moment actually maddens the brain and actually paralyses the strength of its victim, but which, almost immediately, sets the blood on fire with a thirst that cannot be appeased, and which soaks the system in liquid that corrodes it like vitriol, yet stimulates it

to unnatural, unceasing, ungovernable desire. Again, there are publicans whose bar is a school of sin, the gate of Hell, the Devil's trap-door. Are such men friends of Ireland ?

In Father Mathew's time, the publicans, as a body, gave him strong and most unselfish support. They recognised loyalty and chivalrously, that one's private gain must sometimes yield before the sacred duty of Patriotism. Why should they not now at least refuse to sell drink that is not absolutely wholesome ? Why should they not fearlessly refuse to sell drink to excess ? Why should they not discourage extravagance in 'treating' ? Why should they not, in every possible way, prevent drunkenness ? Cannot a publican be a patriot ? Surely many of them are ! Why not all ?

Ah ! if we cannot shake off all fetters from our Freedom, if we must still be slaves, then give me back those iron chains, set the handcuff on my hand, and round my foot let the huge hoarse shackle clang ! Better, better, better far the bonds that bind the body than the bonds that break the spirit ! But, let my brain be clear, my heart loving, and my soul pure. Better the slavery of fire and sword than the slavery of the despot, Drink.

Yet, no ! Through the dark we may reach the dawn. However hopeless our fate may seem ; if you cannot redeem those human brutes that pollute the sacred soil of Saint Patrick ; if your Irish streets must still be shamed with nightly orgies of whiskey ; if your homes must be haunted by crimes of Hell, and your hearts broken with horror and hate ; if you have no hope in the present, look to the future. Save the Child ! Some while ago, a little lad of about eight years of

age, was brought to a Children's Hospital in Dublin—a confirmed drunkard. The tiny form was shrunk and bent. The tiny features, wizened, seamed, blotched ; eyes blear, brutal, and aflame with horrible thirst ; a grotesque and satanic caricature of an old yet infantile man. Aye ! a poor baby was brought in suffering from Delirium Tremens ! The mother, with the milk of her bosom, gave some of the whiskey which she swallowed, and the poor little baby died in the horrors of drink. Save the Child ! Snatch the darling little ones away from temptation. Drink to them is only, always, and absolutely, poison. Teach them while they are innocent to loathe, hate, and curse drink. Beg of them, for the love they bear you, for the love of our Father God and of our dear Redeemer, never to let one single drop of drink pass their lips before the age of twenty-five. That pledge will keep your sons honourable and honest. It will keep your daughters pure. Save the Child, and you secure our future Freedom, you achieve the greater Emancipation of Ireland.

When, some few years hence, on a quiet Summer night, the weary wind will pause to breathe a sigh over your grave, and the pale, sad moon will look mournfully on your tombstone, when your hand shall have crumbled into clay and your heart be mingled with the chill, dank earth, men may think that all your power is still and silent as the moonbeam and all your love lost like the echo of the midnight breeze ; but within the souls of your children's children, your memory will live, amid endearing benediction, as truly as if your actual voice still taught them the noble paths of honour and of truth, as truly as if your actual

tear fell on their cheek warning them away from evil, as truly as if your actual kiss upon their lips won them to temperance and innocence, to the love of God, of home, and of Ireland. For, looking around them, they will, please God, behold a people peaceful, prosperous, happy, free ; and with grateful hearts, they will pray, ' God bless our brave and noble forefathers, who broke from about our country the chains of cruel law, the bonds of cruel ignorance, the shackles of cursed Drunkenness, and won back for the land they truly loved its Birthright Freedom ! '



## CHAPTER VIII

### 'THE LOT OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT'<sup>1</sup>

*Giving thanks to God the Father who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in light.*—Colos. i. 12.

MEN come and go, but the spirit of a nation lives. The restless tides rise and fall. The wild waves flood round the stern rock or ebb away from the silent sand. But the ocean is unchanged amidst the changeable whim of its waters, and the sea is the same for ever. So, while children are born and the aged die, crowds still throng the city's thoroughfare or toil in the quiet field ; and the same song of human joy, the same sob of human sorrow, the same hope and the same love are fresh and frequent as though the same life still laughed or wept or looked forward or looked back. Thus, again, while a people's history is recorded in its ruins, and its future prophesied in the efforts of its energy, a living link unites the dead and the unborn into a personal sharing in the same memories, the same aspirations, and the same love of Fatherland.

Yet, even though, under the enervating action of

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Opening of Saint Patrick's Church, Kilkenny, November 26, 1899.

the ages, a nation's life, being but mortal, may, like the men that make it, fail and disappear, a Spirit that is divine may breathe into hearts that are human a Hope that shall not crumble with the earth and a Faith that shall not fade with the sun ; a light that is the lot of the Saints, and a life that is of God. Therefore do we, with Saint Paul, give ' thanks to God the Father who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in light.'

When through the gloom there breaks the dawn, the sunlight gives its glory to the heavens and its fruitfulness to the earth. From out the bitter salt streams of ocean, the sun gathers store of pure fresh water, garners it in quick gliding cloud, then lets it fall, in soothing shower, on thirsty distances. The sun gives colour to the flower, potency to the seed, softness to the soil, ripeness to the corn. The sun, with its light and warmth, gives life. Without the sun, the earth were only a dark desolate mass of rock and ice. The living thing that cannot see the sunshine is blind.

So, too, without reason's light, the moral world is shorn of its power and of its worth. The mind that is idiot can look upon no meaning : it can listen to no message ; it can vibrate to no motive. Without reason, a human soul is buried in absolute darkness ; nor can the chill of its grave be warmed by the faintest ray of innocence or of honour.

There is a light yet nobler than the day, more glorious even than reason. It is the light that made the sun and from which reason borrows all its splendour. It is the light of God. For ' the Word is Light, and the Light is the Life of men.' Before the world was, this light is ; and when the universe shall have ended,

this light will be still the same. It is, indeed, reflected, albeit feebly and falteringly, in the truth of human intelligence; but in Revelation it has flooded forth with its own rays upon the wondering eyes of men. 'It is the light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.' 'It is the true light'; but, alas! 'the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness hath not understood it.'

Outside the circle of those that are 'partakers of the lot of the Saints in light,' there is a weary waste of sterile powers, and a gloom of phantom aims. Those that have no light but reason, walk in a twilight of the blind, though they think that it is day. We need not ask whether unaided reason can find its way to truth; for the history of mere human wisdom is a tale of failure. That it can reach to mere material science, we know. But when it has tried to lift itself above the mud, and ask the secret of life, the meaning of death, a clue to the mystery that is above, or an explanation of the misery that is below, its history is a record of random and reckless guesses, a catalogue of blunderings, a sad tale of silly cynicism or of grotesque superstition. For them, science stops short with weight and measure. Virtue is recognised by a calculation of profit. Pain has no balm, and pleasure no bridle. There is no sin but unselfishness, and honour that is not paid for is their only crime. As, to them, all life ends with death, so all hope ends in irremediable disappointment; nor can the dearest and purest love of earth look to a meeting in Heaven. Darkness is the lot of those who will not receive the light. Alas! alas! 'He came unto His own, His own received Him not.'

Others do not completely shut out the light, but they shroud its entrance to their soul, so that such rays alone reach their mind as fascinate their fancy. They will not bow to God's authority. They summon His Wisdom to defend itself before the bar of their private judgment. They are not children, but critics, of Christianity. But the dream of a possible middle course between Rationalism and Revelation is fading fast, and many Protestants are waking up to the rude fact, that, in the words of one of their own, they have 'a dead Church and no creed.'

Not so ! not so, with the Saints ! For 'the Lord is their portion and inheritance,' who 'hath led them into His own admirable light.' 'And to those that have received Him, He hath given power to become the Children of God.'

Life, to the Saints, is neither a weird war of wolves, nor a wantonness of voluptuous apes ; neither a ghastly catalogue of penalties imposed by a dead Fate, nor the grotesque pageant of a baseless dream. Life is a love-gift created by the breath of the Spirit of life and of love and of loveliness. It is not made for pleasure nor for pain, but so to pass through pilgrim time of trial, as, by patience and control, through sun or shadow, to grow into self-won fitness for the Paradise which is its inherent heritage and its destined home. Death, to the Saints, is not the end of joy in the triumph of pain, nor the burial of hope in the chill of the grave, nor the last look of friends through the gloom of despair. It is a slumber before the eternal day, a moment before the meeting-time, a final fading of good-bye's last echo, a pause before the happy door, a silence before the song, one quick, still,

dark instant—then the light, the rapture, and the repose.

Brethren ! You have the same Faith, the same Hope, the same Love. Wherefore, again, ‘ give thanks to God the Father who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in light.’

The light that is the same may fall on different atmosphere. We may look up to the same sun, and live upon the same spot ; yet the season may enervate our energy with its heat, or brace our vigour with its cold. The ground may labour with fresh fruitfulness, or sleep beneath the snow. The very sun itself, which is sometimes seen in its splendour, may sometimes be only known to be present through the glimmering of a fog or even only by the hour of the day. In like manner, the light of Revelation, while itself the same, may vary in the fullness of its influence according to the human medium through which it has to pass. The vividness of Revelation is always unchanged ; but the clearness or dimness with which it appears depends much on the healthy or unhealthy tone of individual mind or character. It depends also, amongst the multitude of men, on the existing climate of human opinions. Each age has its own personal character, and, according to that character, Faith will find, amongst a people, new human powers and new human perils.

The old Cathedral of Saint Canice, silent with endearing evidence of the ancient teaching of our Saints, eloquent with mute protest against its present profanation, desecrated by alien ceremonial and disturbed by alien song ; the new Cathedral of Saint Mary, stalwart utterance in marble of an old Faith

that is always young, sweet expression in artistic emblem of the triumph of the innocence of Catholic Ireland over the power of the persecuting sword ; the old Chapel of Saint Patrick, hastily built in days of ignorance and oppression ; this new Church proudly set in undaunted profession of that Religion which our forefathers learned from Saint Patrick, and which Saint Patrick learned from Saint Peter ;—these, assuredly, are signs of the times, symbols of the intellectual currents which ebb and flow with the centuries across the surface of that unchanged ocean to which God alone can set barriers where it ' shall break its swelling waves.'

Brethren, we live in the same world which Christ taught. We are children of the same light, as were His early Saints. We are pilgrims towards the same home. But the moral seasons have brought new powers and new perils.

Our new powers chiefly are these : Freedom, Education, Expansiveness.

By Freedom, I do not mean mere personal liberty ; although, however shamefully we have been persecuted in the past, the personal liberty we now enjoy is equal to that owned by any nation under Heaven. Our freedom as Catholics is almost full. It is far beyond all that is elsewhere found. In France, Spain, Italy, and other countries called Catholic, the Church has been forced to tolerate the interference of the State in spiritual matters—as, for instance, in the appointment of Bishops. In Germany, this interference has been pushed down to the position of Parish Priests. Even in the United States, the state schools are Godless and the Catholic schools heavily handicapped. We

have the absolute and uncontrolled exercise of our Religion, Pastors appointed only by Pastoral power, and, with the exception of a University which must soon come, schools held in our own hands, yet helped by the State. All this gives us Catholics the independence, the self-reliance, the energy, the ambition of freemen. What our forefathers vainly fought for, we have, in great measure, found.

Education, too, is open to us now. This means knowledge, and knowledge means power. Thus, the tide of Catholic influence is steadily though noiselessly mounting, so that the barriers of Protestant ascendancy are being submerged or swept away.

Freedom throws open the doors of knowledge. Knowledge creates expansiveness. The narrow circle that hedged in our former life is levelled. Our knowledge, our sympathies, our interests, our advantages, our opportunities, are now limitless; for they reach to where the day-star sinks, beyond the great new world, into the calm bosom of the Pacific; yet they do not stop short with the setting sun, but they follow it in its nightless dawn, as it rises over the dim and distant east, to travel back and return again to our own green shore.

Our powers are new: so are our perils also.

Freedom brings with it the danger of impatience of all control. One nation, in its delirium of liberty, sets the Rights of Man above the Rights of God. But liberty is not licence. That freedom alone is true which, while it flings away the fetter of force, lovingly accepts ‘the yoke that is sweet and the burthen that is light.’ To serve God is to reign. To reverence and obey the Church of Christ and her

Pastors is to escape the servitude of sin. As there are men who claim to be citizens of the State who yet aim at the downfall of social order in the triumph of anarchy, so there are men who call themselves Catholics who yet wish and work for a revolution in the Church by the effacement of the authority of her Shepherds. They seek to stir up quarrel between the people and their Pastors. But the Church is not made up of two antagonistic parties : it is one and only one living body in which the living influence of the living Christ teaches by the human brain, decrees by the human will, and guides by the human hand of those who under Him hold His authority. Disobedience to His Shepherds is revolt against Christ, and revolt against Christ is high treason against God.

Education, like all things human, is open to misuse. As it is the mightiest weapon in the hand of worth, so can it become the deadliest arm of evil : when science is immersed in matter, it grows blind to soul ; when criticism is only occupied in finding fault, it grows cynical towards truth. Thus, unreasonable horror for the supernatural, and unreasoning hostility towards its proof, are symptoms of the modern mind. Wherefore, now less than ever can we accept an education that is atheist. Modern thought must drift hopelessly in darkness, unless it look to the guiding star of truth, Revelation.

Expansiveness favours democracy ; and, when democracy becomes extravagant, as in the oscillation of the ages it is sure to do, it will not be satisfied with holding the Sceptre of the State : it will seek to lay its grasp upon the Keys of the Sanctuary. But the Kingdom of Christ does not depend upon the people's



vote, nor can it be altered by a plebiscite. Bishops need not bow before newspapers, and Christ’s Vicar will lead, not follow, popular opinion. Radical Catholics are outside the Church.

How shall the future turn ? Will you, Brethren, sons and daughters of old Kilkenny, by noble use of new powers and by noble victory over new perils, amidst new manners and new methods, remain still children of the light, ‘ partakers of the lot of the Saints ’ ? Shall the new Kilkenny be faithful as the old ? Lo ! I look upon your answer. It is not spoken in mere words that waste their weary ripples on the breeze ; nor is it only writ in the closed pages of a book. Your answer is your Church. The sturdy stones, linked like letters, join in word of giant wall, with pointed phrase of arch, and rounded period of roof, until, rising from earth with titanic evidence and reaching towards Heaven in spiritual aim, there stands before the eyes of all, an expression, in strength that sustains and in art that elevates, of Catholic allegiance and of Irish devotedness—an outward utterance that is an emblem of your living Faith in God.

In this expression of Faith there are individual voices whose tone tells of a special devotedness. As in the past, so in the present, Kilkenny knows how to be magnificent in generosity towards God. Your old Church was built at the sole expense of the Ormondes. For your new Church nearly £4000 came from a hand that is now chill within the grave, while the soul that sent the gift has already, we may well trust, reaped its reward in Heaven. Two others, brother and sister, not only in the clasp of home affection, but also in

open-handed holiness, told the secret of their soul in the Altar, in the Altar rail, in the Statue of the Sacred Heart, and in the first fund for the Organ—a fund still to be made full by someone to whom the Spirit may reveal the meaning of sacred music. The stained-glass window over the Altar tells of a widowed love whose tears upon a beloved grave are brightened by hope of resurrection; while the beautiful Statue of Our Lady reminds us that to a true daughter the memory of a mother is never dead. Other gifts were given by other hands. But the parishioners themselves have still to show more earnest evidence of their own interest in their own Church.

Your Church is an expression of your Irish Faith. It is also an exhortation to love the light. Henceforth, one of the features of your city, it will reflect into the souls of your citizens the holy thought that built its aisles and the holy love that made them beautiful. Children will grow up to pray within its walls with the fervour of their forefathers of Catholic Kilkenny. Nay! its lesson shall not be bounded by the sea: it will reach to the exiled sons of Kilkenny. Across the splendour of the African, American, or Australian sky, like gentle memories that cloud bright eyes with tears, will come, in thought, the shadow of the mists that hang about your hills; and through the din of distant cities, with the solemnity of an old man's prayer, yet with the sweetness of a dream of boyhood, the murmur will be heard of the Nore where it whispers its old, old story to the stern Castle of Ormonde; and with the sights and sounds of the beloved spot shall be mingled the endearing recollection of the sacred moments of worship, among those now

distant or dead, within the walls of Saint Patrick's. Such memories turn man's heart to Heaven.

May, then, the old light still freshly shine until, when all darkness shall have disappeared before the eternal dawn, we be made worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in the Vision of the Face of God !

## CHAPTER IX

### *THE TRIUMPH OF THE KELT*<sup>1</sup>

*I took root in an honourable people. I have stretched out my branches as the turpentine tree, and my branches are of honour and grace. My flowers are the fruit of honour.—Eccl. xxiv. 16, 22, 23.*

A NATION is one. It is not the mere sum of added efforts, nor only the resultant of clashing powers. It is more than a mechanical collection of units, more than the cohesive clasp of atoms fused into mineral or crystallised into rock.

A Nation is a living thing, with organs grouped for mutual influence and powers balanced in mutual support, with impulse to act and brain to guide, with need to seek its food and energy to defend its life.

A Nation is a moral personality. It has its own special responsibilities, its own special duties, its own special rights. It cannot, without national suicide, abdicate its authority, nor can it, without national paralysis, relax its hold on its law. It has its own personal powers, whether these be concentrated in a King or broadened out into a Republic. It has its own personal obligations towards its children, towards its equals, and towards God.

<sup>1</sup> Sermon in aid of the new Church, Convent, and Schools, Clones, Co. Monaghan, preached on Sunday, August 19, 1900.

Now, it is not its great men that make a Nation great : it is the Nation that creates its own great men. Its great men do, indeed, crystallise the Nation's vague thought and embody the Nation's abstract character. Thus a great man may appear to have moulded a Nation's destiny, when his power only came from the fact that he personified a national aspiration. For it is only by working with the material at his hand that a man can make a Nation great. If a Nation be decrepit or childish, a great man can only make it more grotesque in its folly, or more dotard in its decay. No great man can invent a great Nation ; but if a great Nation wants a great man, he will stand forth at its call.

'Most men,' a great Cardinal wrote, 'are unable to raise themselves above the influence of their immediate surroundings. Few men can raise themselves above the influence of their country. No man can raise himself above the influence of his age.' The thought has much in it that is true. It is the influence of his national atmosphere that develops the intellectual and social stature of a man.

Many and many a great man has sprung from Irish soil, fruit of that Wisdom which 'took root in an honourable people.' Our great men are indeed 'the flowers that are the fruit of honour,' and their roots are deeper than themselves. It is, then, in our national character, not in individual talent, that we shall find the deep cause which gave sap and fibre to the Triumph of the Kelt.

The history of old Rome is recorded in its ruins. The crumbling cornice tells of a taste that has disappeared. The broken pillar speaks of a power that

is shattered. The empty Amphitheatre, the silent Forum, are crowded with the memories and eloquent with the monuments of a city whose sceptre was once the world's law and whose charter was her sword.

Out far away in the Ocean, where the Roman horizon became merged into the twilight of fable, a little island sheltered its bright green grass under a canopy of cloud, surrounded by the wild weird waters of a then mysterious sea. It, too, has now its ruins. Tall sentinel towers still watch the centuries that pass over its plains, and on many a mountain-side, as in many a valley, the grey old walls of a roofless Church, clad in moss or garlanded with ivy, mark, with a message of awful import, the spot where once the living prayed, where now, under green mounds, like quiet sighs of Mother Earth, the hearts that prayed and loved and wept in the old days, sleep. But Ireland has living memories, too. The trophies of her conquests have not decayed. Her monuments are the living nations whose faith she founded, fostered, or revived. The map of Europe is her book. Her letters are the Christian lives whose Apostles were her Saints. Italy, Spain, France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, still keep, in many parts, freshly kindling, the light of Faith lit from Ireland. How many, how varied, how full of strange adventure and chivalrous deed, the stories of those Irish pioneers ! Thus, for instance, from Bangor, ' the valley of Angels, a very noble monastery, abounding in Saints,' Saint Bernard tells us, ' multitudes of its Saints went abroad to preach the Gospel ' ; amongst them, Saint Columbanus. Behold him as he stands on the bank of the Rhine surrounded by his twelve disciples, giving

them his farewell blessing and advice, before they scatter, to carry the good tidings to the four winds of Heaven! Nor was it only a spiritual triumph that they won for truth. Their path through those then barbarous peoples was the progress of Civilisation. Thus we find Saint Gall teaching the dwellers of Switzerland to plant the slopes of their valleys with rich cultured fruit-trees, and to win with elaborate net, from the mountain streams, the dripping spoil of their waters. We need not speak of that other phase of conquest, nor recall how not only did our ancient Irish invade the lands where darkness dwelt, but to our own green shores they brought multitudes, willing captives to intellectual culture and pure Faith, to study in our schools and practise in our cloisters the science that is of man and the Wisdom that is of God.

What was the secret of this Triumph of the Kelt in the brave days of old? This: they were a race whose instinctive character was quick to appreciate and eager to follow a noble Ideal. Hence, when a Divine Wisdom was wafted to them, it found a soil more fruitful to its light and love than peoples whose character was more clouded by material care and more clogged with material comfort. Thus hath Wisdom spoken of herself: 'I took root in an honourable people, I have stretched out my branches as the turpentine tree, and my branches are of honour and grace. My flowers are the fruit of honour.'

Those were bright days. Afterwards came days that were dark. I will not linger over that page of history blurred by so many tears; for all the memories of sorrows that are dead might rise in such vivid

pageantry of griefs unshriven and wrongs unannealed as should obscure within our eyes the accurate vision of the actual present. What we have to think about is this : that in the very blackest of that night, in the worst horror of that desolation, was manifest, in still more ideal brilliancy and in still more ideal power, the Triumph of the Kelt. Its horizon was, in truth, overshadowed, and its course held in chains ; but this only made the Ideal more magnificent, more marvellous.

Brutal laws make brutal men. Ignorance begets degradation. Hopeless poverty makes the character mean, the mind inert, the will apathetic, the hand sluggish. When circumstances such as existed in Ireland under the Penal Laws fester for centuries within the homes of a nation, there is no human possibility of escape from national decrepitude, national defilement, national dishonour. Yet, wonder at this marvel ! Innocence unsullied in the midst of squalor ; Faith serene in spite of ignorance ; a high and lofty spirit surviving under serfdom ; Generosity unfailing and self-forgotten, side by side with abject misery ; Patience calm in the teeth of cruelty ; Truth faithful even towards treachery ; Self-respect undaunted by social outlawry ; Honour triumphant when disgrace seemed most complete. Only a noble Ideal could have saved the Kelt from the result of causes which, amongst other peoples would have brought about a chaos of foulness, barbarity, and crime. Only God's Wisdom could have created such an Ideal, and only Ireland would have welcomed it. 'I took root in an honourable people. My flowers are the fruit of honour.'

A Nation's life is slow. What months are to a



man, years are to a people. Centuries are its seasons. The clouds that brooded over that weary winter slowly arose and gradually parted till through them at last broke the sunburst. Only a gleam of hope that came from Heaven and moved across the land ; yet it brought the smile through Erin's tears. Life ceased to be but a lingering martyrdom. The Catholic was no longer an outcast. Once, however, that the fetters upon his Faith had been broken, the shackles of ignorance shattered, and the barriers burst which had held him back from his rights as a man and citizen, the Triumph of the Kelt became irresistible and rapid.

That the Kelt abroad is the vanguard of advance I need not pause to prove. Even proud England admits that to the heroism of Irish soldiers and to the genius of Irish Generals she owes her military success ; while many of the noblest names in Austria, Spain, France, are racy of our Irish soil. It would be difficult to define the limits of Keltic influence in Australia or America. Above all, the Kelt is foremost in loyalty to God. At the Vatican Council, the Bishops whose hearts beat with the warm blood of dear old Ireland out-numbered by twenty-four the Bishops of any other race. What our triumphs are at home is typified by Clones.

The venom of Protestant bigotry and the rancour of Protestant ascendancy would have exasperated to frenzy or enslaved in apathy any character that had not the grit, the manliness, the honour of a thorough Kelt. But Protestant bigotry is now doomed, and Protestant ascendancy is dead. The Catholic Kelts of Clones hold the majority in their Urban Council.

Contrast the Clones of some years ago with the Clones of to-day. It seems but yesterday that your poor and persecuted Catholic Kelt knelt in worship within the tottering walls under the crumbling roof of a ruin. Nine huge supports held up the frail shell that shivered whenever the wind sighed or the rain wept. No school stood near; no house for Priests; no Convent home. All was bare, bleak, desolate, as a cabin alone on a moorland when the hands that had built it have passed away, and only the old remain to mourn.

Now, contemplate this actual scene. From this picturesque spot your new Church looks out triumphantly over the town. Long had your Pastors vainly sought to obtain the site. The fierce bigot who held it would not let it go even for an extravagant price. After his death, his widow, a fiercer bigot still, because apostate from the Catholic teaching of her childhood, denied it still more defiantly to God. With appalling suddenness, God called her to judgment, and the spot fell into Catholic hands. The heir resigned his right for a moderate indemnity, and the noble landlord, broad-minded and generous, gave it, on the advice of his kind agent, to the Priests and people of Clones for ever, without purchase and without rent.

The first work undertaken was that most needed—a school for boys. Three years later, the Church was begun, and, owing to the magnificent generosity of the people—only 1300 Catholics, most of them poor—was completed four years ago. ‘A thing of beauty,’ its stalwart walls of rich blue limestone, rippling with ornamental stonework, rise, in quaint Gothic line and curve, to stately nave aisles floored with encaustic

tiles, and sister transepts. Within, the chancel arch of cut Bath stone spreads its wide arms like the protecting wings of an Angel. The inner roof and lower woodwork are bright as they are beautiful in polished pitch pine. Outside, the grounds are spread with artistic taste, like Nature's carpet embroidered by man, to be laid round the throne of God. Fourteen thousand pounds, and—oh, what a grand gift from Clones to Christ!—all paid. But the gift still grew into tower and spire that spring from earth and soar towards Heaven. Toil still, men of Clones! Women of Clones, be thrifty still! for your hands must still pay the three thousand pounds which your hearts have already promised.

Out, out in harmonious distances, you hear the deep solemn voice of the bell as it calls you with melodious accents to prayer; and, when you pray, sometimes remember the lady who gave it: who also gave you the turret-clock which measures the space of your duties by day, and which, while you sleep, holds aloft its burning light to tell the time to the traveller, and to remind the prodigal of the nearness of Eternity. For pulpit, whence God's word is preached, a base of granite, fixed as truth and firm as hope, supports a shaft of eloquent marble with rhetorical pillars of onyx stone. Through the many-coloured rays of the stained glass window one sacred story is told: emblem of that strange work of beauty by the Omnipotent Artist, God, whose grace, falling like the sunshine upon each separate soul which this love has moulded, lights up each with a glory of its own, yet blends them all into one glorious Revelation of the loveliness that is His own. This window, from the

famous studio of Munich, is the gift of a lady who also gave five hundred pounds for the new Convent.

The Convent? Yes; for, without a Convent, your work were incomplete. In lands of the sultry south, where the air, athirst with malignant heat, drains all health and freshness from earth or herb or animal until they fester into fever, where heavy, damp, sluggish vapours, fed by death and fertile in decay, creep along the tainted valley or brood in ghastly motherhood of pestilence over the stagnant pool—there the great tree, with straight, sturdy, shaggy stem, broad splintering branches, glittering leaves, draws the death-germs from the air, drinks the death droughts from the earth, and, like truth to the soul or innocence to the heart, distils about where it grows the fragrant antidote of its breath. Thus from hot disease in the human heart arise vapours that poison the brain, and in the dark recesses of the unhealthy brain are bred evil errors that taint the heart with the malaria of sin. But, in a way which is noiseless as the growth of the grass, in a way which is unseen as the perfume of a flower, the presence of a Convent spreads its pure yet fascinating influence through all the country round, until the unbeliever who hated nuns and the sinner who sneered at them, with their atmosphere of blurred teaching and brutal tone, disappear before the simple sacred evidence of a holiness which can command both the instinctive reverence of the young and the thoughtful admiration of the old. The Sisters who have come to make their home amongst you belong to an Order which has given the most dazzling evidence of intellectual ability and resource. They have now, against overwhelming

odds, the Championship of the Intermediate. You can count on this Convent bringing to Clones an educational glory as well as a spiritual boon. You will consider it a privilege that you are allowed to build their home for fourteen Sisters. For this, over two thousand pounds is still required. The school to accommodate four hundred girls has been already paid for by a bequest augmented by the generosity of some friends. An admirable feature in the school is its technical department, where the girls will be taught those simple crafts of home—such as cooking, laundry-work, and the like—that are essential to the comfort of a cottage.

While the people of Clones have been magnificent in their generosity, their Priests have nobly held their privilege of being first in devotedness as in duty, first in unselfishness as in honour. Besides much else that they have done, the Curates have undertaken to build the Parochial house without cost to the Parish. Of him, your Pastor, whose zeal, ability, and prudence have been the mainspring, the fulcrum, and the balance of all this work—What shall be said in praise? Nothing. He is beyond all praise; for no praise of ours could equal his deserts. He is above all praise; for he needs none. His only wish is that whatever he has done in the past may still entitle him to claim the honour of consecrating all his energy to the good and happiness of his well-beloved Clones.

Wisdom has indeed found in Clones good soil wherein to strike deep root. Its sons and daughters take an honourable place in our first progress toward the final Triumph of the Kelt. In the twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Ecclesiasticus, from which my

text has been taken, the inspired writer gathers from nature many fair forms and noble types of excellence in order to portray before human thought the various aspects of the worth and loveliness of Wisdom. Sublime in its majesty like the cedar of Lebanon, yet exquisite in its charm like the rose of Jericho ; admirable for its soaring strength like the cypress-tree on Mount Sion, yet lovable for its stooping grace like the palm-tree in Cades ; fruitful as an olive-tree in the valley, yet refreshing as a shady plane-tree by a water-fountain in sultry street ; pleasant as the perfume of aromatic balm or of myrrh, yet far-reaching with protecting power like the branches of the turpentine-tree ; deep-rooted as the aspiration of an earnest character and fair as the flower of honour ;—Wisdom is the ideal worth and fertile loveliness of life. Now this is metaphor : but metaphor, within the folds of its beautiful petals, guards rich seed of truth.

One truth is this : that there is nothing great or good or beautiful or dear in man or nation, which does not draw its life-draughts from Wisdom's roots. Hence, all this outward progress of Churches and Convents, which like a forest of emblems, like a dream-land of delightful shapes, gladdens the soil of our land with sacred gifts as the daisies spread their white clusters over the green of our grass, is only dear and only honoured because sign of a true and holy motive which speaks its meaning in sturdy stone and stately steeple.

Another truth is this : that Wisdom's roots are in Religion. No man is great who is not good. No nation is noble that is not holy. No progress is real that is not Heavenward.

A third truth is this : that the roots of a Divine Wisdom to bear full fruit must be fed by human honour. God never made a great Saint out of a mean character ; nor does He call a contemptible race to a great vocation in History.

Behold your vocation ! As Kelts, you are called to honour. As Catholics, you are called to Religion. As both, you are called to triumph. Your triumph may seem slow. Our quick character is apt to be impatient of delay, and to forget that national changes, to be healthful, must be gradual. Again, only time can wear out some difficulties. Those who fretfully despair of our ever obtaining full justice from England because our right to a University of our own is not recognised in twenty-four hours, should remember that it takes a long time for logic to filter into the Saxon skull which for centuries has been encrusted with Protestant prejudice. Yet our triumph is secure. Nor human ignorance, nor human science, can resist a people who follow a noble Ideal. The clay that clings to the mountain-side may crumble with the heat or be washed away by the shower, but the rock remains. So, too, the changes of national whim, like the seasons of national sunshine or storm, may bear away or efface much that is superficial or soft ; but when the deep roots of Religion are fastened in honour, and when honour is secured by a substratum of grit and tough character, their fruits shall flourish like the brave pine-tree that leans laughingly over the precipice, and their flowers shall be beautiful and bright like the gorse which is hardy in tempest and fragrant in heat, green in the snow and gold in the sun. No power on earth can wither the patient and

persistent presence of a true and holy cause. No wisdom of earth can dwarf the progress of God's Wisdom that is rooted in an honourable people.

Forward, then, sturdy Northmen ! In the vanguard, Clones ! Forward, still forward to the Triumph of the Kelt !



## CHAPTER X

### *THE DUTY OF THE GAEL*<sup>1</sup>

*Thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year, and shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of thy land, for it is the year of Jubilee.—*  
Leviticus xxv. 10.

PERSONAL differences disappear in the brotherhood of the Clan, as party interests should be silent in a crisis of the Commonwealth.

To-day we recognise no distinction between the Gael who has come from the green shores of Erin and the Gael who has been nursed 'mid the hardy Highlands or bred in the Lowlands by the fair banks of the Clyde; for broader issues level barriers, and a wider, as well as warmer, enthusiasm knits men together, with clasp of hand and throb of heart, when, at some great turning-point in the life of Nations, they pause to ask each other, 'What is the duty of the Gael?'

Under the Old Testament, the Jubilee was a time of peace, of plenty, and of promise. A time of peace; for as a week of days brings its day of rest, so a week of years brought its year of repose, of restfulness to the land which was let lie fallow, and to the labourer

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Saint Joseph's Church, Glasgow, January 27, 1901.

who could then live on the fruits of past harvestings. A time of plenty ; for not only did the Lord give to the previous year a triple increase, but the Jubilee also proclaimed to the poor its remission, its cancelling of debt, its giving back of the field to its owner, its breaking of the bondsman's chain. A time of promise : for it taught that gratitude for God's gifts should stimulate, as well as crown, man's resolution.

In some way only, and in some measure, do we imitate the Jubilee of old. The whirl of the Modern World leaves little breathing-time to labour of hand or head or heart, nor does its machinery ever stop to forgive the unlucky or to spare the weak. Yet a Jubilee is still, even for us, a turning in the road, where, if only for a moment, we pause to look back with gratitude, and to look forward with resolution.

A member of your congregation used to say that when he was a boy one large cart would have been enough to bring all the Catholics of the district to Sunday Mass. Now, your parish counts eleven thousand souls. Saint Joseph's has indeed grown in numbers. Thus, during the past fifty years, there have been twenty thousand four hundred and fifty Baptisms ; three thousand seven hundred and eighty marriages. But your Golden Jubilee has brought you a God-given increase far more precious than that of mere multitude. This spiritual plenty appears in two gifts that are not only chief in value, but of such kind as to include all other store : education, which is the fruit of cultivated mind ; and religious practice, which is the fruit of well-trained will. I need not follow through the fields which Wisdom has tilled amongst you to celebrate the greater and greater

triumphs of her harvesting, nor point out the spots where she has chosen her abode. Time after time new schools were built. Time after time they became too small to hold the crowds of children thronging to be taught, until for each school-child of fifty years ago there are one hundred now.

The other golden growth which has brought its plenty to your parish is the religious practice of its people. The Religion which a man professes only in empty speech or outward show, but does not put in practice, is to him a myth, if it be not also, before God, a mockery. Your Religion is, thank God, real. Thus, out of eleven thousand souls, including children too young to approach the Sacraments, seven thousand and ninety-one went to their Easter Duty. Again, the Guilds and Sodalities are evidence that beyond the fulfilling of obligation there is amongst you the devotedness of fervour. The Men's Guild, 450; the Christian Mothers', 250; the Children of Mary, 200; the Angels' (for girls under sixteen who have left school), 150; the Working Boys', 150; a Conference of Saint Vincent of Paul, the League of the Cross, the Apostleship of Prayer, 5200. All these show, besides thoroughness of organisation, the fervent Faith and faithful loyalty of true Catholics.

The thought of your own Jubilee must be intertwined with the thought of that great epoch in the Church's life when she pauses, between two centuries, to gaze, in wonder and with deep thankfulness, back over the ways by which God has led her through the Age that is now ended, and to beg Him still to guide her steps through the dark and dangerous regions of the future.

The thrill of one slight vein tells the heart's action, and the pulsation of one city reveals, as it echoes, the influence that throbs through the mighty life of the Nations.

Under different circumstances, the old alternative is always renewed—the choice between life and death, between good and evil. God offers His remission, His cancelling of the debt of sin, His freedom from sin's bondage. This remission calls for man's acceptance or refusal, his resolution or his weakness. What is the attitude of the Modern World? and what is the duty of the Gael?

Have you ever stood by the shore of the sea to watch the breaking waves of the incoming tide? Slowly, yet surely, they came. Slowly they rose, and burst with thundering shock or gentle plash; then sank down away with a roar round the rocks or a sigh on the sand. Surely, they came back with fuller force and deeper energy, until they covered the granite that had breasted their strength, or spread their broad folds where the pebbles had played with them! Thus, slowly, yet surely, is coming the tide that bears in its bosom the ocean throb of a New Era. If you have not yet felt its full flood, upon your life must at least have fallen some first drops of spray cast forward from the advancing influence of the Age. Watch the mounting waters of the Modern World.

Never has there been a time like this before. There have been differences in degree between the Ages. Now we are face to face with a difference in kind. Not since a few fishermen first preached a Gospel of sublime mystery and refined morality to the amused or exasperated pagan, has the chasm

between the world and Christianity been so deep in thought or so wide in conduct. There have been discussions about the Church, or denials of it. There have been attacks on its authority, or revolts against its law. But all this has been in the name of some positive teaching, and with the assertion of some absolute right. Modern Thought has broken away from those moorings. It sees no polar star of truth. It holds no compass of conduct. It doubts about everything except that there is no dogma. It drifts with the current of pleasure or with the breath of expediency. It is, then, pagan of the pagan. Yet it has learned much from Christianity—enough, at least, to make it ashamed of its apostasy and anxious to cloak its crime. It is not frank in its debauchery like the worshipper of Venus, nor logical in its cruelty like the worshipper of Mars. It calls its sins by pretty names. It hides its cynicism in pretty phrases. It is, to the core, bad—without virtue, without honour, without law, without God. Yet it speaks as if the refinement, the beauty, the gentleness, and the kindness of Christianity were creations of its own. The world is now, however, nearly two thousand years too old to invent the loveliness of the character of Christ or the nobility of His Law.

The influence of the Age bears with it some indirect good. Its Materialism proves the one-sidedness of Modern Science, the depravity of its mud morals, and the despair of its mud doom. Its Idealism wearies men with empty dreams, and draws them towards that Religion whose Founder is divine as God yet human as a heart, beautiful as a vision yet near as a brother. Its Atheism and Agnosticism turn men's minds towards

the only Religion that is logical. Its Socialism frightens the nations back from the abyss of Anarchy to take refuge in the only citadel of divine authority. Its Secularism frees the Church from the trammels of State patronage, to become identified with the people through their loyal, because unconstrained, acceptance of her allegiance.

Yet the Spirit of the Age works much direct evil. When water saps the wooden foundations of a bridge, decayed beams gradually give way ; and when the subtle influences of an evil Era permeate the supporting principles of Religion, only the Christians who are staunch as stone will survive. What feebleness of belief against the sneers of ignorance, or against the sophistries of science, do we not find even amongst Catholics when their convictions are not firmly fixed in solid understanding of their Faith ! What weakness of virtue against the laxity of modern life or against the demands of modern sensuality do we not find amongst those Catholics whose conduct is not braced up to hardy healthfulness by constant and thorough practice of their Religion ! Thus it comes to pass that in some countries, still called Catholic, while the old name, once deserved, is still retained in spite of an utter repudiation of Catholic teaching and a satanic hatred of the Catholic Church, we behold a faithlessness worse than Protestant and a rottenness worse than pagan.

What is the world coming to ? What will this strange New Era bring ? The Church is safe. Christ has promised to safeguard it ; and ' His Word shall not pass away for ever.' But what of the nations ? Shall Faith fly from these uncongenial climes to

nestle under other skies where minds are more open to the sunshine, and where innocence is not chilled by heartless sin ?

One fact seems evident. It is an Age of big wars. The closeness of communication which binds the nations into one assembly of rival foes or jealous friends, the concentration of their interests, and the smallness of the world left to conquer, intensify the danger of collision, and, if collision, of conflagration. So, too, the army of Paganism, which is recruiting all that are not Catholic, and the army of Catholicism, which is recruiting all that are not Pagan, must meet, in the New Era, in a war that will be universal.

Another fact : Whether England, after her centuries of blunderings which were retrieved by unmerited luck or by unmeasured sacrifice, make, what God forbid, one last blunder that shall be irretrievable ; —trusting with fatal fondness to the one chance of her fleet doing always what often already it has almost failed to do ; leaving every other chance without thought or without defence ; with no fortress, not even a trench, to protect the richest and most unprotected city in the world ; with no practical plan to rally, train, or guide the millions of her citizens who might be soldiers ; without precaution against surprise ; without store against siege ; staking every hope on the old superstition of Rule, Britannia ! that her ancient courage and ancient carelessness can still defy the resources of Modern Science and the refinement of modern skill ; dreaming up to the very day when, with a dash prepared by the inspiration of a military genius and carried out with the accuracy of a military machine, the foe is enthroned in London ;

while she writhes with the useless strength and impotent rage of a trapped lion, caged within iron bars by her keeper conqueror ;—or whether England, condescending to learn from past mistakes and future hazards, recognising that perfect preparedness is the only guarantee against attack, realising that if she would not grow effete, plethoric or paralysed, she must grow healthy, muscular, soldier-like throughout every inch of her gigantic frame ; flogging with unsparing hand her traitor sons who supply articles to her enemy's newspapers, information to her enemy's spies, or weapons to her enemy's armies ; fostering in peace, by free wide kind rule, the loving allegiance which she shall have won from the countless countries where her flag floats ; trusting in war to the combined resources, concentrated energies, and disciplined valour of the peoples who own her Motherhood ; become the England that Englishmen dream of ;—whether England, in the New Era, become the insignificant prisoner of a little island, or the acknowledged Queen of an Empire-world, this fact remains : that the language which we speak can suffer no control, and that, be England little or be she great, the influence working through her language must be a most potent factor in the moulding of the future world. Where, then, lies the duty of the Gael ?

We read in the Book of Judges (chap. vii.) that Gideon, in the Name of the Lord, spoke to his soldiers : ' Whosoever is fearful and timorous, let him return.' Whereupon twenty-two thousand went away. Ten thousand soldiers still remained. ' They are too many,' said the Lord. And the Lord said to Gideon : ' Take them to the water, and there I will try them.'



Most of the men, with eager and uncontrolled movement, stooped to the very surface of the stream, 'and lapped up the water with their tongues.' Three hundred men, bending over the stream, caught the water with strong yet controlled hand and bore it to their lips. And the Lord said : ' By the three hundred men, that lapped water, I will save you.' To do great work God always calls upon men of earnest and enthusiastic character, but whose courage is under the control of a high aim, and whose action is inspired, and yet restrained, by a magnanimous motive.

Mark, now, the application. I quote from a great English writer. ' Out of the peat cottage come forth courage, self-sacrifice, purity, piety, and whatever else is fruitful in the work of Heaven. Out of the ivory palace come treachery, cruelty, cowardice, idolatry, bestiality, and whatever else is fruitful in the work of Hell. . . . There is nothing remarkable in either the height or form of Craig Ellachie. It is darkened by a few scattered pines, and touched along its summit with a flush of heather ; but it constitutes a kind of headland or leading promontory in the group of hills to which it belongs—a sort of initial letter of the mountains—and thus stands in the minds of the inhabitants of the district, the Clan Grant, for a type of their country, and of the influence of that country upon themselves. Their sense of this is beautifully indicated in the war-cry of the Clan : ' Stand fast, Craig Ellachie ! ' You may think long over these few words without exhausting the deep wells of feeling and thought contained in them,—the love of the Native Land, the assurance of their faithfulness to it ; the subdued and gentle assertion of indomitable courage,—

'I may need to be told to stand, but, if I do, Craig Ellachie does.' You could not but have felt, had you passed beneath it, at the time when so many of England's dearest children were being defended by the strength of heart of men born at its foot, how often among the delicate Indian palaces, whose marble was pallid with horror, and whose vermilion was darkened with blood, the remembrance of the rough grey rocks and purple heaths must have risen before the sight of the Highland Soldier; how often the hailing of the shot and the shriek of battle would pass away from his hearing, and leave only the whisper of the old pine-branches: 'Stand fast, Craig Ellachie!'

As in the past, so in the present are England's battles won by the steadfast courage and headlong daring of the Gael. In that other more dread, more desperate, more weird, more woeful war, where meet the forces of Hell and Heaven, striving for the souls of men, do you still ask me, What is the duty of the Gael? I answer, with the war-cry of my own Clan, 'To the front, O Cahan!' and to you I say, 'To the front, the Gael!'

When, from the impious outside world, furious assaults are made upon your Faith; when the lawless, reckless mercenaries of vice try to bar your way onward and upward, Stand fast, Craig Ellachie! To the front, the Gael! Yea! even though the weapons used against you be prejudice, calumny, hatred, contempt, Stand fast, Craig Ellachie! To the front, the Gael! Even when, within the true Church, many are feeble of Faith, timid, apologetic, inclined to make truce with sin and with Satan—even though many go back, you must not even look back; for you have

put your hand to the plough ; but—Forward ! Be staunch ! To the front, the Gael ! In the very midst of the drunken rout who bring disgrace upon their country, humiliation to their Church, ruin to their homes, and damnation to themselves : Be temperate ! Stand fast, Craig Ellachie ! Or, should the battle rage within you, in passionate turmoil and onset of blood, Stand fast, Craig Ellachie ! You must not be the slave of the Flesh, you must conquer ! To the front, the Gael ! When in the wide false voluptuous world Christ is alone, flogged, jeered at, spat upon, are you afraid of the rabble ? Are you ashamed of your King ? Nay ! you will stand up for Him. You will stand by Him unto the death. Stand fast, Craig Ellachie ! When Christ calls for some one to help Him ; when cowards slink back : To the front, the Gael !

When at last the fateful moment comes that finds you upon the battlefield, even in death, a conqueror, an honour to your race, true to your Religion, and a glory to your glorious Christ, even though your brain be fainting unto forgetfulness, even though your hand seem to relax its hold, you will yet hear, like the voice of the wind through the pine wood, like the mysterious song of the sea, the murmured message of your King ; and as your whole soul uprises with a strength that vivifies and transfuses your whole self into a divine energy, you will stand alert, defiant, indomitable, in answer to His call : ‘ Stand fast, Craig Ellachie ! ’ ‘ To the front, the Gael ! ’

## CHAPTER XI

### *THE CHURCH OF MOURNING*<sup>1</sup>

*Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*—St. John xvi. 20.

SILENT and motionless, Slieve Donard, close to whose contemplative crest Saint Donard, blessed by Saint Patrick before his birth, lived his life of lonely prayer; Slieve Donard, monarch of the Mourne mountains, silent and motionless, looks down through dizzy distances to where, far below, the waves of the sea, with ceaseless clamour and ceaseless change, rock in restless ebb and flood. Silent under the summer sky, motionless 'mid the winter storm, the mighty giant mountain looks out over his tributary hills to where Slievna Largy and Drumena, with twin grasp, guard Lough Island Reavey, whose swift waters, drawn from rain and drained by stream, are brightened by passing sunshine or darkened by passing cloud or ruffled by passing breeze. So, too, while the restless generations of men rise and break and fall upon the everlasting shore, or while the lesser tides of quiet homes hide their sobbing waves deep in valleys of mourning, a power, silent to outward ear, motionless to material

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Dedication of the new Church of Kilcoo, Co. Down, Sunday, June 30, 1901.

vision, looks down over the storm or calm of human history out on the wide world, and over the unknown joy or grief of souls that come and go in the valley of Kilcoo. The tide that floods forth its laughing waters in the glory of the morning, will ebb with the evening sun, leaving the bark on the bleak shore alone. The sunshine that rests on the bosom of Lough Island Reavey will fade with the nightfall. The century that comes with exultant hopefulness will fall back into the ocean of oblivion. The home that is happy will at last be hushed in darkness. Silent, it would seem, and motionless, eternity looks down on time, while the history of human life is a history of disappointment, as is also the story of Kilcoo.

When the great Saint Patrick had died, the men of Armagh claimed the body of their beloved Archbishop. But the men of Saul maintained that the earthen shrine of their Apostle should rest on the spot where he had lain him down to sleep his last sleep. As arbiter of their dispute, they took, an old tradition tells us, the judgment of an unseen power. Placing the coffin upon a waggon, they left the oxen free from human guidance, to be led, as they believed, by hand invisible. Slowly the heavy oxen trailed along the weary road, until, towards eventide, they reached a spot, one day's journey—about twelve Irish miles—distant from Downpatrick. Here the mourners halted for the night. But before the pale spectral mists, which spread their soft white shroud over the valley, had been scattered by the swift, bright arrows of the sun that had climbed up from behind the mountains, shrill cries of grief startled the wild birds, and wailings of lament broke through the music of the west wind,

and louder and louder shouts of men and shrieks of women grew into tempest of angry disappointment and horrified surprise, until a deep sigh seemed to answer from the bosom of Lough Island Reavey, while Slievna Largy and Drumena, in sympathetic sorrow, frowned through their cloud-tears. For the coffin was empty; the body of Saint Patrick had disappeared. When, in after years, a Church was built upon the spot, it was called Kilcoo, which means, 'The Church of Mourning.'

But where the body of Saint Patrick had not rested, his spirit dwelt. Up among your mountains, the Faith of Ireland's Apostle grew hardy as the gorse, and the sweet fragrance of its virtue was wafted from your humble home to distant places with hallowed associations, like the thoughts told by the eternal hills that look down upon the valley of tears.

In those distant days your forefathers built, near to the spot where I stand, the old Church. There, long centuries before that sad revolution, which has been called a Reformation, the same Faith was taught which Christ taught to Peter and Peter to Patrick, and Patrick to Malachy, and Malachy to Kilcoo—the same Faith which we now hold to-day. There, in that old Church, your forefathers heard the holy Mass. In those fields or on that hillside they toiled. Here, round about, where sacred affection now brightens the joy or cheers the grief of your own lowly hearth-stones—here, too, in olden days, purity embalmed the happiness of their homes, and love brought comfort to their sorrow. When they had ended their exile, and passed away from this vale of tears to look upon the Blessed Fruit of Mary's innocence, their bones

were laid to rest in the Churchyard that nestles under the sacred shelter of the old ruin. There lie buried your dead. Among the many fond phases of Christian feeling, a devotion most dear to Irish hearts is the memory of those whom we have known and loved and lost : a memory brightened by the sure hope that, as they are only lost to our sight, not lost to our love, so shall we yet see and still love them hereafter ; a memory consecrated by the sweet prayer that our great Father in Heaven may lighten the load and shorten the hour of their awaiting, so that soon, pure as Angels, they may look upon His Face. More than most others, the mourners of Kilcoo should remember and pray for their dear dead ; for, Saint Malachy, patron of your Church, loved most tenderly those sad exiles from Heaven. He himself died an exile of Erin.

No wonder that the melodies of Ireland should thrill with plaintive strain ; no wonder that in our national character short and fitful gleams of mirth, like the sun-burst upon our meadows, should be so often dulled by weary mists of melancholy, or darkened by tears of tempest ; for, upon the pages of our history there are thickly scattered stains of blood, and, within our very soul, there have been cut by the sword, or branded by the fetter, sensitive wounds of outrage and indelible scars of wrong. A Reformation, whose path through our land was lit by burning homes, and whose Gospel was preached by the heel of the oppressor, could not but leave after it black records against the stranger and bitter memories in the slave. Yet in this the Catholic Church proves her divine truth, that she taught her children to look above and beyond the bigot despot to the Will of a mysterious Providence,

and, under the rafters of the desolate cabin as well as under the roof-tree of God, to submit in the midst of mourning and to pray through their tears. The power which kept Ireland true to her Faith in the teeth of bigotry or bribery, trustful towards God in the grasp of cruelty or infamy, staunch in her innocence under the very breath of vice, was the power of the Irish Priest. The Priest was not only their teacher and comforter in the Chapel: he was their father, their friend, in their home. Thus, amongst the records of your devoted Parish Priests, we read that Father Smith, having been, when at Paris during the French Revolution, forced for safety to study medicine, was able afterwards to bring to the poor that mourned not merely the blessing of his divine ministry and the balm of his human sympathy, but also the healing of his kind skill. He it was who, in 1802, built the Chapel of the penal days, the stones of which have now been used for the interior of this your new Church. But, before that Chapel had been built, your parish had had a day of bitter grief, when, in 1756, the revered and beloved sons of Saint Dominic were evicted from their home amongst you.

Behold ! now, a strange change has come over our land. Had it been vouchsafed to our fathers to contemplate in vision what we now realise in fact, they would have marvelled at a wonder only to be wrought by the hand of God. Where the lowly Chapel once crouched, hiding among the cabins of the poor, a stately Church now stands in triumph. Where the place of Catholic worship, disguised in mean garb of brick, once stood aside in unfrequented byway, a superb Cathedral of stout granite grit and fair Gothic form now holds possession of the public square and dominates the town.



Everywhere have Convents set up their pure shrines and busy schools. Everywhere have Seminaries uplifted their studious halls.

More, much more, for these are only outward signs : the Catholic Kelt has stepped forward to his own place of right in the front of the world of thought and influence. The tide is coming in. It is rising up through the law to judgeships, through commerce to opulence, through medicine to titles, through politics to leadership, through the ranks of the soldier to the honour of the general. The tide is steadily coming in. It will rise until the Catholic Kelt owns his own Ireland once again.

What is the secret of this success ? Our force is in our Catholic Faith, warmed by our Keltic blood. Your Faith is staunch. We need no argument to prove what these strong walls assert. For, lo ! these blue-grey granite stones are earnest words set, with patient evidence and eloquent devotedness, into the symmetry of one great act of Faith, which is your Church, proclaiming the hardihood and the unity of such allegiance unto God as shall not crumble with the wet, nor soften with the sun, nor shudder in the storm, but which, stately though severe in its Gothic grace as are the stern mountains that surround it, shall remain to be a memorial of your lives gathered of innumerable sturdy deeds into one most beautiful and majestic Temple of truth and holiness, a worthy dwelling-place for Christ. All this has not been done without sacrifice. The hard earnings of your toil have been hoarded up, many an honourable desire of your life denied, in order to secure the beauty of God's House.

The scene to-day is one which will always dwell within your memories with a feeling of sacred awe.

The Shepherd of Down and Conor has come, encircled by his zealous Priests, to bless this new Church built by his faithful and well-beloved flock of the parish of Kilcoo. Hither have thronged the crowds of friends whose generosity has given to you a much-needed help. The sympathies which share your joy and hope to-day are not bounded by these hills. From quiet valleys like your own, from amidst the din and dust of cities, from over vast continents of land, from across the hoarse Atlantic waves or sultry Pacific waters, thoughts are turned towards Kilcoo and prayers are wafted forth from warm hearts that throb in harmony with your own. You and your own Soggarth aroon welcome a day of thankfulness and yet a day of awe. It is an epoch in your history.

Silent and motionless, the great mountains look down over the lesser hills into the valley of mourning. Silent and motionless, they look down, teaching the same solemn lesson as in the old, old days that are dead ; the same as when the wild wail of disappointment first woke the shrill echoes of Kilcoo ; the same as when the ancient Church was built ; the same as when it crumbled into ruin ; the same as when your poor fathers, groaning under Penal Law, prayed in their poor Chapel ; the same as when, time after time, the old Churchyard laid bare its bosom to receive new dead. Silent and motionless, the mountains look down. But the far sea thunders in ceaseless agitation like the wide, wide world ; and near, Lough Island Reavey whispers with restless ripples, like the lives that rise and fall in the valley of Kilcoo. Silent and motionless, the same mountains will still look down when others now unborn will pray in this Church, when the old Churchyard shall have gathered to its

chill repose other generations, when of those now here not one but shall have passed away into the silent motionlessness of the tomb.

Yet, as to the north-west of the valley our sight can travel, through the spot where the mountains stand aside, out towards the distant horizon, so our thought can pass beyond the encircling barriers of time and space towards the far future. May we not hope that, although the tear and the smile which make our grass green and our sky soft may still intermingle their shadow and sun, the tears of Erin's clouded Centuries will change to long bright Ages of unclouded joy, when, triumphant over the slavery of the oppressor and the sacrilege of the bigot, she shall behold her children united in true, staunch brotherhood of national love, prospering in all peaceful contentment, exulting in full measure of education, pure still with the innocence of old, yet earnest with the energy of a new era, happy in the mutual helpfulness of friends, hallowed by the beloved Communion of Saints, and, above all, reverent in chivalrous allegiance to God, to His Christ, to His Church.

Yea ! yea ! ' Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' The Church of Mourning shall become the Church of Triumph. The grave shall give up its dead. The body that was lost shall be found in Resurrection. The friends that wept in the Churchyard shall, in the land where there is no good-bye, meet again those that had left them to pass beyond the everlasting hills. Out of this vale of tears, out of this time of our exile, away from weeping and mourning, far from sorrow, by the pilgrim path to Paradise, we shall, with the help of Our Father in Heaven, enter into the joy of Our Lord.

## CHAPTER XII

### ‘NEITHER HAMMER NOR AXE WAS HEARD’<sup>1</sup>

*The house when it was in building was built of stones hewed and made ready, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house when it was in building.—III. Kings vi. 7.*

By the shore of old Loughrea all was tranquil on that October evening. The hills that guard its waters were faint in the far mist, fading into the stealthy twilight. Only a chill gleam in the west told that the day was dead. The lonely road, hard by where the Workhouse stands, crept near to listen to the waves that were breaking their hearts against the stones, with such sad, quiet sobs as if all the sin and sorrow of the world were hid deep down under the dark and throbbing bosom of the Lough. The scene was mournful in its gloom, dreary in its solitude, silent except for the weary and disconsolate wailing of the water.

Yet all that apparent repose was agitated by invisible energies, all that outward wilderness was crowded with forces that clash in tremendous war yet combine into mysterious unity. Not one drop of water in the

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Saint Raphael's, Loughrea, Co. Galway, October 24, 1901.

Lough, not one atom of earth upon the mountain but acts or reacts by feud or friendship to build up the world's mass, and holds the distant stars in the grasp of its gravitation. All of it, clay and wave and air, whirling with colossal strength, rushing forward with appalling speed, is lost in absolute insignificance amidst the abysmal void, lit with titanic volcanoes, revolving with myriad suns, scattered with seething meteors, tossed with measureless forces, receding into endless distances.

Just then the gentle voice of the Convent bell broke in on my dream, with the prayer of the evening Angelus. Only a quiet home, outside the boisterous battle of the world, hid from the glare of worldly triumph, unvisited by turbulent ambition, business, pain, or pleasure, unnoticed or unknown to the speculator, soldier, or statesman,—only a quiet home where a few sisters enter in youth, and, after simple years of unobtrusive drudgery, after silent years of unappreciated mercy, one after another, pass away to give place to others, like the little ripples that, unheeded, sigh and fall on the drear beach of Loughrea.

Yet, underneath the quiet and unimpressive scene, may there not be the infinite energies of a creative power? Where there is no shout nor stroke of man, may there not be the multitude and the magnificence of the stars? May not God be building to Himself a House ‘where neither hammer nor axe is heard?’ As, in the material universe, the mightiest forces are neither evident to the eye nor audible to the ear, so, too, in the moral world, the men who make most noise are not always the men who do most work, and a deep though silent influence may masterfully sway the

destinies of a nation in spite of the vanity of politicians or the vituperations of newspapers, in spite of the chattering of a Parliament or the strutting of a King. The stones for the Temple of Jerusalem were hewn at a distance from the spot whither they were brought ready to be fitted in their place, in order that no clash of iron should disturb the hush of awe and prayerful silence of the building of the shrine where Jehovah's Covenant should dwell. In the raising of a spiritual edifice, as in the building of a nation, God does not always take the advice of worldly craft, or use the tools of worldly power.

The Golden Jubilee of the Mercy Convent of Loughrea suggests, on the one hand, the simple features of its human history, and, on the other hand, the divine magnificence of its hidden work.

On an October evening, eve of Saint Raphael's Feast, just fifty years ago, two Sisters of Mercy, Mary Magdalen Burke and Mary Xavier O'Connell, sent from Baggot Street by Reverend Mother Vincent Whitty at the request of Dr. Derry, then Lord Bishop of Clonfert, arrived in Loughrea. Here they found two postulants waiting to welcome them. The Bishop took thirty grown girls from the Workhouse, and sent them to the Sisters to be taught needlework and instructed in their Religion. It was the first work of Mercy at Loughrea, as also afterwards at Ballinasloe, when two years later, 1853, a Convent was opened there. But, at Loughrea, Mercy found another work to do. The famine of 'forty-seven had spread its black wings over the land. In hopeless horror, the people's ashen cheek and livid lip, corpse-like chill and fire-like fever, told, with appalling

eloquence, the slow agony of starvation. Skeletons that were not dead, with staring eye-ball and bony hand, lay along the highways or crawled into hovels. When the fiend Famine fled, its brood, the swarming shapes of pestilence, still lurked behind in riot of disease. Mercy ! mercy ! Oh ! there was sore, sore need of the Sisters, when Death was greedily gathering in the harvest sown by famine. In the Workhouse of Loughrea eight hundred sick festered, and eight other houses were also filled with the strange forms and fell shapes of numberless maladies bred of want and fostered by wretchedness. Like Angels of Mercy, the Sisters went amongst the plague-stricken to bring back health and hope to some, and to smoothen for others the path to Paradise.

At Ballinasloe, as often elsewhere in Ireland before the freedom had been won which Catholics now enjoy, bigotry barred the Nun's way to works of Mercy. Not for ten years were they even allowed to visit the sick-poor in the Workhouse, and nearly ten years more had passed before they got charge of the Hospital. Nay ! Catholic tenants were forbidden to send their children to the poor school of the Sisters, and when afterwards this blind and brutal prohibition was withdrawn, such parents were forced to pay a weekly fine for the support of Protestant schools.

In 1882, Portumna ; last year, Woodford ; and this year, Eyrecourt, youngest daughter of Loughrea, began their blessed mission of bringing Mercy to the poor. Now, the Sisters have five National Schools, two Industrial Schools, three Technical Schools and three Hospitals.

Those facts belong to public history. Many home-

memories are cherished within the Convent walls. Amongst them there are two of special sacredness as records of devoted life and noble character, yet of special sadness, for they still thrill with an echo of unwonted tenderness in their last good-bye. Ten years ago, the revered and beloved foundress of Lough-rea, Mother Magdalen Burke, slept in Christ. Only a year ago, when the buds were opening in the garden, after a life beautiful in spiritual charm as the white lily, fragrant like the mystical rose in winsome warmth of kindness and balm of holy influence, Mother Gonzaga Smith was laid to rest amidst the flowers she loved so well. Simple, or even insignificant, as the records of a Convent may appear to those who only judge of work by weight and only measure influence by miles, they are yet the revelation in actual action of a divine principle, and the promise in growing fulfilment of a divine result.

A triple aspect of the Convent is, first, the heroism of its life; secondly, the immediate blessings of its work; thirdly, the ultimate triumph of its influence. I will briefly try to sketch the outlines of these aspects.

The heroism needed to fulfil the daily duties of a Convent is not always evident to those who do not live the life. Were some ladies living in the world to leave their own homes, bringing to one common treasury their personal fortunes; were they to engage in some pursuit that should add to their revenue; were they to produce a magnificent demesne, build a splendid castle, keep a sumptuous table, and dress in artistic as well as rich attire; were they occasionally to repose from their labours by the banks of the Rhine or amid the roses of the Riviera, the world



would say that they had a perfect right to do so, and would regard with interest, perhaps with favour, the foundation of this innocent, as we suppose, and somewhat aristocratic, benevolent probably, and certainly comfortable, Ladies’ Club. But, were they to forfeit all private ownership, to live on frugal fare, to dress in cheap stuff and austere fashion ; were they to relinquish all right to leave that spot ; were they to submit their will utterly and for ever to the rules of a minute and ceaseless code of self-sacrifice ; were they to foreswear the love that unites two hearts in one home ; were they to become poor servants of the poor ; were all their means beyond their meagre support to be given to good works ; and, above all, were they to do this only and always for God, the world would be not merely amazed but annoyed, not merely critical but unfair. Nay ! some Catholics stand, on this ground, with the world against the Church. They sneer, for instance, should the Nuns, who cannot wander outside their enclosure, have a pretty garden where they may breathe the breath of Heaven after the atmosphere of the crowded school-room or the poisonous Workhouse ward. Or, again, these uncatholic Catholics will lament the waste of money should the Convent be beautiful as well as solid, or should the Chapel be worthy to be the House of God. Now, such censure is a condemnation of the universal practice of the Catholic Church in its Popes, its princes, and its peoples, and, through its practice, a condemnation of its principle. But this is rather startling insolence on the part of those who believe their Church to be infallible. Yet, ‘ to aim only at what is useful would be to rob the world

of its highest use.' To object to the refinement of the home where God has gathered His consecrated souls, or not to love the beauty of God's House, is to rebel against the verdict of reason, the law of Jehovah, and the spirit of Christianity. Refinement befits the Nun's home; heroism alone can uphold the Nun's heart. Without a divine call, without a divine help, no woman could be heroic enough to live the Martyrdom of a self-immolation that does not die.

As to the second aspect of Convent life—namely, the immediate blessings of its work—it is little to say that the work is as well done by Nuns as by those who make it their profession. In some ways it cannot fail to be better done. In the first place, reflect that even inferior work is better done by those who are educated and refined, and much more so when the workers are elevated in mind and character by the ennobling influence of Religion. In the second place, conscientiousness is lifted to a higher sphere when there is no question of personal profit, when the only gain sought for is the good to be done to the poor, when earnestness is enforced by the rigour of a vow, and disinterestedness guaranteed by the whole-heartedness of a vocation. This point has a deep significance for the economist. Were Nuns to have control, the cost of administration would be less, and that speculation would be impossible which, as I happen to know, exists in some Workhouses where contracts are given for bribe and favour to be fraudulently executed, and where officials combine, from top to bottom, to cheat the ratepayer and starve the pauper. In the third place, the poor know well that, with the Nuns

the Faith and innocence of their little ones are safe, and that their sick are sure to find both the sympathy of pure, kind women for their bodily sufferings and the help of human angels for their immortal souls.

The third aspect of the Convent is the ultimate triumph of its influence. Here our thought must travel over a wider field. I appeal to your love for your Fatherland and to your allegiance to your Faith.

Natural History tells us that there are insects strangely suited by tone and shape to appear part of the plant on which they feed. There are political parasites that live and thrive on ‘ Erin’s native Shamrock.’ They affect the green colour and in many ways look like patriots; but they destroy patriotism. By biting sneer, or cutting sarcasm, or withering misrepresentation, they kill every national aspiration not their own. From generous impulses which they do not share they suck all sap. What is left? Only the green insect itself. Its influence is only destructive. Its instinct is not love of country, but hunger to devour. Now hatred of Irishmen is not love of Ireland. The ideals and aspirations of Ireland belong to Irishmen; they are not the private property of a man, nor of a mob. The mind of a nation is not to be blindfolded by the definitions of a narrow dreamer, nor her will paralysed in the grasp of an intolerant dictator. Will it seem strange to say that the Convents in the country are roots of true and healthy patriotism? Think!

On the one hand, the Convents supply sound material. Their influence for moral good is deep, wide, almost unending. It permeates the people’s blood. It leavens the mass. It enters into the heart

of the child with a sacred sweetness whose fragrance never disappears. It brings a divine balm to human suffering. It holds up an ideal of innocence that can never be obscured. It whispers a motive for holiness that cannot be hushed. A great man wrote, 'the way to enslave a nation is to first corrupt its morals.' The truth of this is evident in the Rome of the Caesars, in the Florence of the Medici, in the France of the Bourbons. The men, who now are hurling France down the path that leads to national apostasy and national disaster, know well that to succeed they must pluck up the roots of virtue and of Religion. They cannot propagate Free thought except by Free love. They must root out religious houses in order to reach Atheism, and, through Atheism, Anarchy. Our Convents intensify more and more the certainty that the mothers of our people shall be virtuous, their homes pure. Now, as Ireland is innocent, so shall its patriots be true. On the other hand, the Convents are roots of true patriotism, because their sympathies are broad. Not being political, nor personal, the influence of the Sisters is all the more patriotic. There is a love of Ireland whose heartstrings are touched by Ireland's melodies, whose eye delights in her green grass and purple hills and tender breeze and tearful, even when smiling, sky. It is a love that can be disinterested and impartial. It loves all Irishmen ; glories in their virtues, excuses their faults, pardons their mistakes. It loves not only the soil of Ireland, but its sons. Such patriotism is learned in Convent Schools. The influence of the Convent triumphs in a still nobler sphere : it fosters Faith. There is, in truth, something even nobler than

love and loyalty to Country : it is love and loyalty to God.

I stood in the dockyard. Around and far above me rose the titan ribs of the skeleton ship. The clang of a thousand hammers welding the joints smote on my ear with dizzy din. My sight was bewildered by the majesty of its proportions and the might of its massive plates, while my thought realised its triumphant power for war.

I passed away and now stood within the studio. Upon one easel lay the picture of a rustic spot where one seemed to feel the caress of the merry sunshine and drink in the fragrance of the flowers. Upon another lay the breathing features of human loveliness. Here the sea raged in impotent anger against the rocks. There it reposed in smiling peace underneath the white-winged ship. It was the home of Art.

Again, I wandered through the streets of the city sacred to learning, where dwell together the classic lore of old days and the marvels of modern science.

Then I asked myself, what is the use of it all ? It is power, beauty, knowledge. But, What is the use of it ? Noble, indeed, if it be nobly used ; fiendish, if its use be foul. These things may be curse or they may be blessing, as the will that wields them is like Lucifer or like Raphael. Now the use which one shall make of what is useful depends upon whether the mind clearly sees and thoroughly accepts the truth which decides the right order of action and the real nature of worth.

Another scene : the Convent School. Simple as it appears, there is yet beneath the surface a force at work, which as far surpasses the power of the

battleship, the beauty of the studio, or the learning of the University, as the speed, mass, and splendour of the stars surpass the ripples of Loughrea. Not one tiny child of all these clustering crowds of little folk but has its mind lit and its will moulded by the eternal truth and absolute excellence of God. Ah ! we have something better than the sword of Germany or the dollar of America, the navy of England or the art of Italy. We have our Irish Faith. It makes our sorrow sweet, and our pleasure sacred. It makes our poor ones richer than the wealthy, and our ignorant more learned than the wise. It does more. It unveils to our vision the glorious truths hid to the human brain. It attunes our soul to a divine and beloved music inaudible to the human heart. It does more. It lifts even the poor child from time to eternity, and makes it sharer in the life of God.

Work, Sisters, your simple work ! Lavish still your silent mercy ! Fashion characters for the building of Ireland. Mould souls for the Temple of God. Where ' neither hammer nor axe is heard,' a divine plan is being fulfilled. Hereafter a glorious nation shall grow up from the roots of our Convent homes. Work, Sisters, your simple work ! Lavish still your silent mercy ! Let the chattering crowd pass—politicians, merchants, soldiers, artists, scholars. Let them pass like the dust of the lonely road. They only see the faint gloaming on the hills. They only hear the little ripple of the Lough. They are blind and deaf to the tremendous issues of eternity. Let them pass. Work, Sisters, your simple work ! Lavish still your silent mercy ! All human work ends in ruin. The work of the spirit grows for ever. When

the boastings of our age shall have been silent for centuries, when London, Paris, or New York shall be as dull as Athens or as dead as Babylon, the quiet ripples of your influence shall still break upon the everlasting shore. Work, Sisters, your simple work ! Lavish still your silent mercy ! for ‘ the house when it was in building was built of stones hewn and made ready, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house when it was in building.’

## CHAPTER XIII

### OUTSIDE OR WITHIN THE WALLS<sup>1</sup>

*I will set my tabernacle in the midst of you ; and my soul shall not cast you off ; I will walk among you, and will be your God ; and you shall be my people.*—Leviticus xxvi. 11, 12.

EACH Church has its own personal history, for it is a central point round which revolve the most sacred inward instincts of a people's life ; it is also the most solemn outward expression of a people's soul. It is not merely that old associations cling around it, as round the spot where one played in childhood, whence one first ventured forth beyond the horizon of home. Nor is it merely that fond memories return to rest there, as they go back to lovingly linger near the grave where sleep our dear dead. But the Church, with its associations and its memories, sweet to childhood and sacred to age, is also a material portrait of the people's soul. The hillside where he roamed or the meadow where he loitered, the hedgerow where he plucked the hawthorn in the springtide, or the garden where he gathered the autumn fruit, may haunt the exile's heart with the tenderness of a tear yet with the power of a prayer. But, the Church is a

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Opening of the new Church of Saint Eugenius, Moneyneany, Co. Derry, June 8, 1902,



realisation, in outward emblem, of still higher ideas, of yet nobler emotions. It is more than an association; it is a symbol. It is more than a beloved object towards which the heart turns. It is a work more eloquent than words, and action more real than emotion—evidence and outcome of the thoughts and motives of a people's soul.

A sturdy Faith has fixed its grasp deep down into the soil not with fibres of roots that rot, but with foundation of rocks that remain dry amidst the drip, and firm against the frost. Yes, the stalwart allegiance of Catholic Kelts lifts itself in stone walls to keep the storms of error without and to shelter the shrine within. Peace, like the wings of Angels, spreads its arched roof above. Below, humble and earnest resolutions are strewn in serried pavement that upholds the feet of the faithful. Thoughts delicate as silk, aspirations pure as cambric, emotions fragrant as flowers, fervour burning as flame, reverence sacred as incense, love precious as gold, untainted as diamond,—all these are palpitating prayers that have taken outward shape in eloquence of immortal emblem; and, as the breathing of a living soul may be caught and crystallised in drops clear as dew and pure as pearl, so the spirit of a people is caught and crystallised in its Church. Its Church is its act of Faith.

How could a stranger fitly tell the story of your Church? Should one not have climbed your pleasant hills, and followed all the windings of your streams, and paused to meditate amidst the hollows of your woods—once much more wide and wild than now—in order to be able to describe the several secret spots where, during the penal days, your forefathers

heard only Mass, or where, in spite of blinding laws of brutal bigotry, their children learned to read and write, or where are found the tombs of your Priests, who—some dauntless unto defiance, others prudent unto peacefulness—kept freshly fanned and brightly burning the glory of your Faith? Much more, Should one not have felt the weariness of your daily toil, should one not have heard the breathing of your daily prayer, should one not have participated in the heroism of your daily sacrifice, in order to count up the cost or express the significance of your Church? The story is too well known to you, too sacred, too dear, to be more than lightly touched by stranger hand.

Your old Church, built by Saint Patrick for a library, but by Saint Columb consecrated to divine worship, suggests a wider horizon of ideas, and a meaning that appeals to the more universal sympathies of the Nation.

The lesson of your Church is this: outside these walls, let false Faith remain: within these walls, let the true spirit of Irish Catholics ever dwell.

Outside the walls of Christ's true Church there are the errors which, like bitter breezes, blow to blight the buds of Christian holiness, or which, like dripping clouds, hide or obscure the light of Christian truth. In other lands, other kinds of error imperil Faith. The mental poison of our Irish atmosphere is Protestantism. I do not speak of those foul things, contemptible and loathsome in the eyes of every honest Protestant as they are in our own, reptiles who crawl where squalor and sin have corrupted Catholic loyalty, who, with Judas, bribe, buy, from

drunken and degraded Catholic parents, the souls of their offspring, who, with hypocritical coil, creep into Catholic confidence to leave after them the trail of their treacherous insinuations, the offensive slime of their falsehoods. From their infection and attack, however, all Catholic life is safe. Those reptiles only thrive where spiritual disease abounds, and moral filth. Nor, on the other hand, do I speak of honest and convinced Protestants, of whom, doubtless, there are many whom you know and respect. It is indeed evident to us that their Faith is false, but it is also evident that they are themselves sincere, that, while they give a mistaken allegiance to another Church, yet, as they receive those truths of Revelation which have shone upon them, and are ready to receive them all when the full light shall have dawned upon their mind, so are they in soul our own. Nor, again, are we concerned—not directly at least—with the logical unsoundness of the Protestant Religion. What we are now directly concerned about is the evil influence of Protestant principles on Catholic Faith. Not as if that influence could, except in very rare and very random cases, induce Catholics to become Protestants. The influence of Protestant principles on Catholic Faith is not to effect a change of Faith, but absolutely and irremediably to annihilate Faith. That influence is not constructive: it is destructive. It cannot do anything: it can only undo. Even with every aid of wealth, rank, education, authority, it could not make Ireland Protestant. Even without such aid, its tendency would be to make Ireland infidel.

Here, however, we must pause in order, emphatically and peremptorily, to exclude a misunderstanding

on which the reptiles would greedily fasten. There is no question of unfriendliness, much less of animosity, towards Protestants. There have been great Protestant Irishmen of whom Catholic Ireland is proud. Prejudice, animosity, hatred, persecution there have been; but on the Protestant side, not on the side of the Catholic. Need I recall what English Protestant historians and statesmen have said of the horrors of the Penal Laws? In the days of our ascendancy—as, for instance, under James II.—we did not retaliate. Wherever, in Ireland, Catholics are in overwhelming majority, Protestants meet with frank friendliness; even the obnoxious, insulting, and aggressive reptiles are rarely trod upon. May I recall some few words in defence of Irish Catholic forbearance? We may well appeal to History at a time when fresh efforts are being made to infuriate the Protestants of the North by calumniating the Catholics of the South. You are aware that recently, at Coleraine, a Protestant Bishop, whose very dignity should have taught him to show at least a more diplomatic regard for truth, laid aside the sheep's garb which he wears in Waterford, and assailed Catholics with the characteristic rancour of the Orange wolf. His spleen carried him far. He has shuffled his words; and foremost and most indignant amongst those who demanded his apology were the Protestants of his own diocese.

With regard to the earlier period of religious differences in Ireland hear what Taylor wrote in his 'Civil Wars of Ireland': 'It is but just to this maligned body (Irish Catholics) to add that on the three occasions of their obtaining the upper hand,

they never injured a single person in life or limb for professing a Religion different from their own.'

With regard to an intervening period, Lecky, in his 'History of the Eighteenth Century,' says: 'In spite of the fearful calamities which followed the Reformation, it is a memorable fact that not a single Protestant suffered for his Religion in Ireland, during all the period of the Marian persecution in England.'

With regard to our own times, listen to Earl Spencer, who, speaking at Chester, on June 16, 1886, said: 'I have had some experience of Ireland, I have been there (as Viceroy) for over eight years; and yet I don't know of any specific instance where there has been religious intolerance on the part of Roman Catholics against their Protestant fellow countrymen. I have known, and I deeply regret it, that there have been signs of bitter religious animosity; but where has it been shown? It has been shown in Ulster, where more than half of the population belong to the Protestant Faith. I believe that the Protestants have been the chief cause of nurturing and keeping up this religious animosity.' As witnesses to this fact we have, amongst others, Hallam, Walpole, John Wesley, Sydney Smith, Dr. Johnson, Leland, Laing, Lunn. Speaking, then, not of persons, but of principles, nor even directly speaking of themselves, but rather of the evil influence which those principles tend to exercise on Catholic Faith, I remind you of what Pope Leo XIII. wrote in a recent letter to the Universal Church—what, indeed, is admitted to be evident by the outside world of Rationalists and scientific Atheists—namely, that the principles of the Reformation went further and struck deeper than

the first Reformers ever thought or intended. Another great man, not a Catholic, wrote : ' Luther was not a Reformer ; he was an Anarchist in Religion.'

The first and fundamental principle of Christ's Revelation, in the intellectual order, is the promulgation, through the Church, of a body of divine truths before which Reason must bow, and which it must accept on Faith. In the moral order, the first and fundamental principle of Christ's Revelation is the personal responsibility of each soul towards a law of personal holiness, with personal merit for well doing, the need of personal sorrow for sin, and personal atonement under God through Christ. But the Reformation made individual reason the criterion, the measure, the standard of Revelation, as to its truth ; and as to its moral aspect, personal responsibility and personal atonement were shifted into a mere trust in Christ's merits.

What havoc these latter principles would work, should they influence Catholic Faith or Catholic moral life, you will more fully recognise if you reflect how, in the first place, while against all earlier errors in Christian history, there was always some principle of Revelation to appeal to ; the practical paganism of the Reformation is logically identical with Rationalism. The principle of Scripture being a standard of Faith is only a theory, an illogical theory, and therefore, even should Protestantism be called a theoretic Christianity, yet, as it officially hands over Scripture to be misunderstood by every foolish head that reads its own meaning into God's Word, it leaves the Protestant practically outside the walls of Christ's Church. Now the supremacy of individual reason over

Revelation is absolutely antagonistic to the Church which enforces the supremacy of Faith.

Reflect, in the second place, how a Religion, which allows the right to doubt or to deny its dogmas, must have an influence hostile to Revelation. In order to doubt the truth, it is enough to be ignorant. In order to deny the truth, it is enough to be mistaken. In order to reject the truth, it is enough to be bad. In order to recognise the truth, one must have knowledge. In order to defend it, one must have thorough knowledge. In order to obey it, one must have virtue. If, then, a Catholic youth be thrust into an atmosphere of erroneous ideas, much more if he breathe an air where float stealthy germs of moral weakness, do you think that his soul's health is safe? What is the strength of truth, if you stifle it? What is the power of holiness, if you poison it? Do you avoid the breath of cholera or the touch of typhus? Truth is one; error, infinite. Men admire virtue; they imitate vice. Ha! It is disease that is infectious, not health.

Mark that this evil influence of which I speak is not one of open argument, but of imperceptible appreciation; it does not directly act on thought, but indirectly affects one's way of thinking. Thus, we can understand how it has come to pass that some Catholics, brought up in an atmosphere brilliant with scientific splendour and toned by literary culture, should be conscious only of the mental power that spoke to them, unconscious of the mental influence that breathed upon them; so that, while some remain sterling Catholics in the Faith which they profess, yet most of them take views on vital issues more akin to those of their Protestant professors than to those

of their Mother Church. Thus they believe that the average Catholic student can live in an atmosphere saturated with practical Paganism without having his Faith weakened or his heart soiled.

Nay! rather, while we frankly meet our Protestant fellow countrymen not only with the courtesy of civilised citizens, but also with the sincere friendliness of earnest Christians; while we fully recognise that they may be persuaded of the truth of their own belief; yet, since we have received a pearl of great price, a truth not got from man but given of God, a truth not shown by Reason but taught by Faith, a truth, mysterious, many-sided, vast, embracing the earth while clasping Heaven, we hold it to be too sacred a gift from Christ, too dear a boon to us, that we should rashly risk it in the outer air which we know to be fraught with falsehood and pregnant with poison; and, therefore, as far as may be, we keep all influence of error and of evil outside our walls.

Within the Church of Christ dwells the Spirit of truth and love. Yet, as that Spirit breathes on human minds and beats in human hearts, its teaching may be darkened or disobeyed by human mistake or human malice. An influence possible to arise within our Catholic Ireland, one of deadlier evil than any other, would be an influence that should create estrangement, or even antagonism, between Patriotism and Religion. An example of what I would point out is evident in a great nation that is dear to Ireland. France—by the glory of her history, by the chivalry of her children, by a kinship of intellectual ideas which outlasts time, by a sympathy of moral character which outstrips



space,—France won our Keltic admiration and our Keltic love. Yet the France of to-day teaches Ireland a sad lesson, a twofold lesson—the lesson of the France that is Catholic and the lesson of the France that is infidel.

You are aware that the Church in France is persecuted. The guillotine has not as yet been gorged with Catholic blood, But the fierce and more fatal weapons of exile, confiscation, official tyranny over personal freedom, and official dictation to personal conscience, are openly and ruthlessly used against what the Church has declared to be vital organs of her life. To deny that these measures are only intended by their promoters as a prelude to a war of extermination against the Church, one should be a dunce or a dupe. But what brought about the ascendancy of Antichrist in Catholic France? During the many years which I spent in France, not as a tourist in hotels, not as a student in a cloister, not merely as a guest amongst his friends, but as one drawn within their inner circle and dwelling by the hearthstone of their home, I had learned to feel the pulse of French national character; I had heard the intimate utterance of their aspirations; and I had freely gazed upon the innermost workings of their brain and heart. Most intimately familiar with their youth, I had watched them grow up side by side, the sons of the Old France and the sons of the France that is New.

Not the glory of the bright sun, that shone in the blue heavens over his beautiful France, seemed so glorious to the son of the old noblesse as the honour of the race that proudly throbbed within his blood.

Around his ideal were grouped, in stately line, traditions of chivalrous aims and knightly deeds. All these seemed to him to have come from the breath of those conservative principles which had created the greatness of France and to be identified with the Monarchy which embodied it. The Monarchy was also, to his mind, inseparable from the Church which had blessed its banner in battle, and hallowed its homes in peace. But the Monarchy would not move forward with the world, and the world could not lag behind with the Monarchy. When their King became impossible, the Royalists of France put their politics above their Religion, and, because they did not like a Republic, they selfishly shrouded themselves in their old-fashioned ideas, and remained dead to French national life, while their country tumbled down from Thiers to Gambetta, from Gambetta to Clemenceau, from Clemenceau to Waldeck Rousseau.

Do not judge them too harshly. The Republic they had to deal with was not an ideal form but a fact—a fact which was a government in the hands of infidel men, guided by anti-Christian principles, aiming at the freedom of France, not from the mastership of man but from the Fatherhood of God. Yet the Royalists might have rescued France from the Republic of persecution, and given her at least a Republic of fair play.

On the other hand, Infidel France, base-born of the Revolution, nursed with blood, fed by plunder, professing to dethrone God in order to worship a prostitute, preaching a Liberty that means licence for vice and exile for virtue, an Equality that throws the refuse of society to the top, a Fraternity that

leads to civil war ;—this France that has no past to look back upon but its Reign of Terror and its Dictatorship of a Corsican, no future to look forward to but its downward path towards Atheism and Anarchy ;—this infidel France is up to date. It knows what it wants to do, and it goes the straight way about doing it. It is as scientific in its methods as it is satanic in its aims. To those, like us, whose ideas of freedom are not French—for we take it to include fair play—to those, like us, whose Atheists even stop short at a sigh over a cigarette, a sneer against Religion in a magazine, or a scolding against Priests from a platform, it may seem incredible that men should actually hate God as the demons do, or, like Antichrist, loathe the Church. Yet, so it is, alas ! in France. Infidel France forbids the Catechism to the child, the Mass to the official, the Sacraments to the soldier. Its secret sects plan and prepare the campaign. Its followers are united, disciplined. Its leaders know how to hoodwink the Nation. The people must be carried away by the delirium of a political cry or caught by a bait to personal greed ; so they shout ‘ Freedom ’ while they forge the fetter ; and they invite the mob to confiscate the supposed treasures of Charity, while they themselves have their hands in the purse of the State.

Nor is Infidel France even patriotic. It starves the resources of French influence abroad. At home it oppresses the people with taxes in order to fatten a world of officials far more costly than the extravagant Third Empire. If her Navy had not been plundered, France would not have had to blush for Fashoda.

Yet—is it only folly, or is it worse than even

folly?—this Infidel France, incarnate in its worst types, is the friend, the patron, the model of some men who attempt to be leaders of Catholic Ireland. It is not harmless to seek to estrange a nation from the Church ; for ‘ the nation that will not serve God shall perish.’ Are such men jealous of an influence not their own ? And would they buy power at the price of making Ireland infidel ? But to annihilate the influence of Religion is national suicide ; for, again, ‘ The nation that will not serve God shall perish.’

One last word about what your Church must, most of all, mean to you. In moral sense, it is the temple of Truth, the consecrated symbol of your Religion. In real fact, it means the House you have built for God : not the great Temple that Jehovah planned and blessed ; where, with awful mystery, were kept the tablets of His law ; where, but once each year, His High Priest in silent terror entered, could equal our humblest Chapel. For lo ! within your shrine He dwells Himself, the Divine Brother whom you love, the human-hearted God whom you adore.

Then, bring the fairest fabric hand can weave to lay upon the Altar, where rests the Bread that is Divine. Of purest metal make the Cup which holds the Blood of God. Around, light waxen tapers—types and pledges of your Faith. Around, set sweet flowers, beautiful like innocence, fragrant like prayer, to tell, what no tongue could utter, the words of your child-soul to its Father in Heaven. Bid music ravish the outward ear, to echo the harmonies that throb through your heart. Up, up, you have lifted these strong walls of stone, like your own sturdy Northern souls.

Above, you have spread these soaring arches, like Heavenward aspirations, to meet and unite, like the one great aim that shelters and joins all else in your life.

Now, your Church stands here—your great solemn act of Faith; the outward likeness also that shall show to ages to come the features of your Keltic Catholic soul, as it is the love-gift of your Keltic Catholic heart, to the love of the Heart of Christ.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LOYALTY TO CHRIST<sup>1</sup>

*He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me.*—Luke x. 16.

ALL through the world's history, men of eccentric genius have appeared from time to time like strange comets in the sky, proclaiming, with startling but transient flash, theories as extravagant in their trend as they have been evanescent in their influence. Seriously and defiantly, contemptuously and wrathfully, these men have rebuked the world for its common sense. But the world did not take them seriously. It has often been much surprised by their splendid extravagance. It wondered at them for a while. Then it came to understand them, and smiled or sneered. The comet vanished; and the world went on as before, quite unshaken in its common sense. Some of these intellectual meteors were only mad or morbid on one point; on other points they were really sane. Thus, for instance, John Stuart Mill had ideas on political economy and many other matters, which are shared by reasonable men. One of his irrational eccentricities was that he would not allow

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Visit of His Lordship, the Bishop, to the new Parish Church, Strangford, Co. Down, August 16, 1903.

us to be certain about two and two making four ; nor would he on any account tolerate our extending this certainty to the stars.

Now these meteor-like minds, in which genius and folly are found in strange fellowship, do little harm so long as they remain in the region of mere logical nebulæ nor clash against the atmosphere of the world's practical life. Kant may maintain that our mind fashions its judgments without reference to truth ; Hegel may admit the identity of contradictories ; Berkley may deny that there is any reality in the world round about us, and yet the world suffers no more hurt from such philosophy than it would should another man of genius choose to plant cabbage in his garden with the root upwards. But it is quite otherwise when wild theories are taught that touch the living nerves of actual existence. Mark well, in the first place, that while the ordinary principles, to which men appeal as reasons that steady and safeguard personal character or social conduct, seem plain enough, because they rest upon much more fundamental ideas which are evident, yet should these fundamental ideas be called themselves in question, they are, on account of their extreme abstruseness and depth, incapable of proof to the mass of men. Thus the first essential rational roots of private property, or of marriage, or of the authority of parents, or of personal freedom, or of civil power are quite beyond the ken of ordinary folk. Mark, in the second place, that when a wild theory only explodes in the air it may only give matter for amusement ; but should its flame spread within the homes of men it may result in horror, ruin, agony, despair ; and leave, after the fierce frenzy of its outburst,

only smouldering ashes and charred remains where once a beautiful and stately city stood. When a theory sets fire to the passions of men it will work itself out into the moral disaster and social havoc of a nation.

Suppose, then, what may easily happen before the world has grown much older, that, amongst a populace huddled together into huge cities by the gravitation of wealth, gasping and groaning under oppressive loads of taxation, murdering or being murdered in the deadly feuds of refined competition, hungry, savage, desperate leaders should arise, pointing to the few enormous millionaires who suck out all its blood from the very heart of labour, and denouncing those men as mere robbers who thus usurp the fortunes belonging in reality to the nation ; or suppose that lads of hot, sensuous temperament, undisciplined character, and unbridled impulse, should be taught with great parade of proof and splendid enthusiasm of eloquence, that there is no real difference between right and wrong but only such distinction as comes from usefulness, and that the only test or standard of usefulness is the pleasure which it gives ; or suppose that a mob, mutinous, discontented, reckless, repudiating with fierce hatred all the traditional restraints of the past, and with implacable scorn resenting all mastership in the future, should be educated into the idea that no power can ever bind the will of any man, that all authority is tyranny and all law a degrading and intolerable imposition ; supposing that something like this should come about, What barrier would you set up to save the world ? When the wild waters gather, hoarse and harsh ; when their waves begin to mount and mutter ;



when their swollen billows crash in blinding, deafening, overwhelming cataracts of white horror ; when the more you pile up the feeble efforts of mere physical force in order to dam back the tide, the higher, the deeper, the broader, the stronger, the more savage, the more wicked, the more horrible, the more irresistible it becomes,—What will you do ? Will you stop the savage cyclone of a human sea by telling it that it ought to be calm ? Can you turn back the ocean of satanic pride or brutal passion by telling beast or devil that they are not nice ? No ! no ! You cannot command the will of man, nor can you make the world obey unless you can say ‘ you must.’ But no power of earth has got the omnipotence of ‘ must.’ What power can rule the waters or the world ? Then the Lord answered Job, ‘ Who shut up the sea when it broke forth, when I made a cloud the garment thereof and wrapped it in a mist as in swaddling bands ? I set my bounds around it, and I made it doors and bars. I said : Here unto thou shalt come and shall go no further and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves.’ ‘ Thou art mighty, O Lord, and Thy truth is round about Thee. Thou rulest the power of the sea and appeasest the motion of the waves thereof ! ’

The Revelation of Christ brought to the world a twofold boon. In the first place, it was a clear and unmistakable showing forth not only of the ideal truths which elevate and enrich the intellect, but also of the practical truths which are the essential supports of man’s moral conduct and social happiness. This teaching was, further, given in the very way best suited to man’s nature, so that while the wise are led by safe paths to the highest pinnacles of proof, the dull

or ignorant have yet within their reach a certainty as sure as science, as useful as common sense. Hence it is an absolute standard wherewith the world may test the accuracy of its theories, the justice of its laws, and the soundness of its civilisation. In the second place, the Revelation of Christ is an emphatic and inevitable proclamation of divine authority, so that, however fierce the winds of pride may be, however tempestuous the waves of passion, man must obey its moral must.

Now, the Revelation of Christ is not to be looked upon as superseding the teaching or authority of Nature's Lord. It was not a change of dynasties. It was not a destroying and building up again. It was a divine development. It was a living although supernatural growth. Man was adopted into God's sonship. The empire of the Creator was merged into the Kingdom of Christ. Jehovah became Jesus. Hence, on the one hand, allegiance to God must now be loyalty to Christ ; to lose Christianity is to lose all Religion. Hence, on the other hand, we must absolutely and without challenge accept that state of things which Christ has established. But Christ has established upon earth a Kingdom which holds His own authority to teach and His own right to rule. The Kingdom of Christ is His Church. But, again, the Church of Christ is not a mere abstraction, not a mere imagination, not a mere theory. It is a thing as real as the granite or marble Altar of its Cathedrals. It is a living thing with thoughts that thrill through human brains and loves that throb in human hearts. Hence, loyalty to Christ is the devotedness of His actual soldiers to their actual officers, the fidelity of His actual sheep to their actual Shepherds.

Consider, then, what appalling ruin may be wrought by those men or women, whether they be splendid as comets or stupid as stones, who, more or less consciously, are doing in the world the devil's work. I do not now speak of those who stand in open hostility against all Religion, whose theories are often only the harbingers of mental trouble or moral tempest, and whose efforts are at least hindered in most of their social harmfulness by the evidence to sensible men that their triumph would mean the effacement of civilisation. Nor do I now speak of those whose Religion consists in the denial of Catholic dogma and in the abuse of Catholic practice. Those many amongst them who are honest are honest upholders of Christianity, and in so far forth they keep the truth and they safeguard society. Those few amongst them who are the professional pugilists of Protestantism are a low, mercenary class—resort to low, mean tricks, and are as sad and as regrettable a discredit to the respectable members of their own Religion as they are contemptible to ours. Nor of hostile stranger do I now speak, nor of frank foe. Of those I speak who mix the poison in the cup at home. Of those I speak who are most like to Satan, who do the devil's work in the devil's own characteristic way, who are the chief because the most crafty, the most underhand, the most traitorous spirits of Hell.

Many devout Christians fail to reflect that while one evil and hateful spirit, enemy of God and of His Christ, is the spirit personified in Satan, there are yet other bad and malignant spirits that are not personal demons but are real only in a wicked influence borne in upon the soul, or in a wicked impulse bred

within it. Out of the Hell of evil hearts was vomited, with violence of earthquake, with fierceness of fire, a dread and pestilential spirit that became incarnate in the hysterical imagination and embittered spleen of a human life, and thence fell transformed into a book whence the same horrid spirit breathed upon every reader the horrid breath, yet now perfumed with honeyed hate, with sanctimonious blasphemy, its spittle wrapt in hypocritical praise and cast in the face of Christ, while over the fair Spouse of Christ, over the body of His beloved Church, was drawn the trail of the slime of the serpent.

Again : another evil spirit, real as any rebel angel hurled from Heaven although impersonal as the contagion of leprosy, is the spirit which attempts to speak from Heaven the messages of Hell, which poses as a Catholic, while it taints the minds of Catholics with contempt for Christ's teaching, and befouls their hearts with disloyalty to Christ's Shepherds. When the loyalty of true Catholics lifts aloft for Christ's worship beautiful and splendid shrines, when it offers to Christ's altar its fairest flowers, its costliest cambric, its daintiest lace, its most delicate silk ; when for the Body and most precious Blood of Christ it gives its cup of purest gold and sets ruby, diamond, emerald, sapphire round about His throne, when for Christ's Priest, its own beloved Shepherd, it builds a home whose grace and refinement are typical of its own allegiance, then, the breath of the spirit of evil, with pious purr or groan of Pharisee, whispers its sneering lament over primitive poverty or its hypocritical condemnation of Church pride. This particular spirit of evil, in which the malignity of a fiend is embodied in the meanness

of a cad, is particularly prolific in misrepresentation, so that one atom of fact is used to recommend a universe of fraud, until the living Church of Christ is so grotesquely falsified as to appear ridiculous as well as despotic, useless as well as avaricious, dishonest as well as bad.

Begone, Satan ! not from the spirit of falsehood do we Catholics learn the truths of Christ ; not from the spirit of hatred do we Catholics learn the laws of Christ. Begone, Satan ! Our views are the views of the Church ; our opinions are the opinions of the Church ; our motives are the motives of the Church ; our practices are the practices of the Church. We do not merely accept, under protest, the doctrines imposed under threat of heresy ; nor do we merely grudgingly obey the laws enforced under penalty of separation. We are thoroughly in sympathy of mind, of will, of heart with the Church of Christ living in His living Shepherds. We have heard His word : ‘ He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me.’ Begone, Satan ! We renounce thee and all thy works, whether of will or of war. We renounce thee and all thy pomps, whether of pride or of passion, whether of barefaced devil or of disloyal Catholic. Begone, Satan ! Without allegiance to His living Shepherd there is no loyalty to Christ. Begone, Satan !

Brethren, recognise the terrible importance, in this our age, when volcanic disturbances are threatening to break forth in the moral and social world, yet the unappreciated importance of the fact that there is no possible support for man or for nation except on the foundation laid by Christ. Recognise further, that

if we be not with Him we are against Him, that if we are with Him it must be with our whole heart and soul. Yet there is little need to urge on you, sons of the sturdy North, thoroughness in your allegiance to your Faith or wholeheartedness in your loyalty to your Pastors. Not more clear are the pure waters of your majestic Lough than is the frankness and the fullness of your pure Catholic Faith. Not more lovely are the stately hills or stooping valleys, the whispering woods or smiling meadows, amidst which your homes are set, than are your hallowed Catholic lives where every soaring of success, or every bowing down of sorrow, or every gratitude of rejoicing, or every fragrant incense of prayerfulness, is beautified by the same sunshine of God's blessing and rendered fruitful by the same soft rain of God's grace. May you still more and more grow unto the true understanding and love of the Kingdom of Christ, that so there may always remain amongst you and amongst your children, even unto the holy Age, the same sturdy and trustful allegiance to your Shepherds, the same loyalty to Christ.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SABBATH YEAR<sup>1</sup>

*Sing joyfully to God all the earth : serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before His presence with exceeding great joy. Know ye that the Lord He is God. He made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.—Psalm xcix. 1-3.*

LOUDLY and long the trumpets of Israel shrilled their glad message, heralding the dawn of the year of grace, till the jubilant strains were caught up and re-echoed in eddying tempest of triumph by the faithful sons of Jehovah. It was the Jubilee year, the year of special reverence unto Jehovah, and of special gladness unto Israel, for it was the year of rest, of plenty, and of freedom. In very many real or mystic ways the number seven bears in Revelation a sacred significance. During six days the works of creation had gone forth from the Hand of God and on the seventh day He rested. Thenceforth and for ever the Sabbath is the Lord's day, the day of reverence and of rest, so also by Israel's law was each seventh year made sacred to the Lord. This enfolded a triple meaning and enjoined a triple duty. In the first place, in reverent recognition of God's absolute

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Church and College of the Sacred Heart, Limerick, June 18, 1909.

ownership of the earth, the land was to remain untouched by man's labour, nor might his toil intrude upon the fallow field. It was a year of sacred restfulness. In the second place, in order to show forth God's infinite claim on man's trustfulness, the harvest garnered from the previous year was promised to be so abundant as to fully provide for the needs of the Holy Year. It was a year of plenty. In the third place, in order to typify and to enforce the emancipation of man by the redemption of God, the fetters of force were shattered, and the bonds of the law broken, slaves or captives were set free and all debts cancelled. It was a year of freedom. Yet, again, when seven times seven years had been numbered when seven sacred years had passed, there came the great Sabbath-Year, the fiftieth year, the great year of triumph and rejoicing, the year above all other years, the year of holiest rest, the year of unwonted plenty, the year of fullest freedom. It was announced by the glad clang and clamorous triumph of trumpets. Hence its name Jubilee, from the Hebrew word meaning 'a horn,' of which the trumpet then was made. 'Sing joyfully to God all the earth : serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before His presence with exceeding great joy. Know ye that the Lord He is God. He made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.'

Under the Testament of love, the Spouse of Christ, guided by His Spirit, has kept the reverential rest of the Sabbath, although she celebrates it on the day of the Resurrection. She has also kept and consecrated with still fuller grace the celebration of the great Sabbath-Year. Even at times of special glad-



ness, that mark bright epochs in her life, she anticipates the actual year of the Jubilee in the enthusiasm of her triumph, making a year memorable by warmer fervour in God's worship, by more bountiful bestowal of spiritual harvest, and by more magnanimous mercy, unto sin's captives, of spiritual freedom. Thus, too, the children of the Church, taught and encouraged by their Mother, are wont to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of a happy blessing or the fiftieth anniversary of a holy work as a day of festival of thankfulness and of triumph. Fifty golden years ago the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, on the invitation of the Bishop, Doctor Ryan, and with the welcome of the people, founded their first house in Limerick under the standard of the Sacred Heart. To-day we are gathered round the Altar of the Sacred Heart in reverent thankfulness for His protection in the past, in glad recognition of His actual blessings, and with the triumphant courage of His Providence of the future. 'Sing joyfully to God all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before His presence with exceeding great joy. Know ye that the Lord He is God. He made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.'

On some quiet Sunday morning you may have lingered near the spot where stands Limerick's historic stone. Over the water there will have come to you the solemn, yet sweet, sound of happy voices as the people were thronging to Mass. Even the arches of the old bridge will have looked more grave and reverential than on the work-days of the week, while, below the bridge, the river rushed over the rapids mingling, with their wordless psalms in praise of the

great Creator and their untaught Alleluias of thanksgiving, their sad sweet ceaseless song of the memories of the past. Around about you there was an atmosphere of gentle prayerfulness and within your soul there will have doubtless dwelt a feeling of holy rest. In the restful prayerfulness of a Sabbath morning, one's thoughts may naturally turn back: the thought of the young to the near work or joy of the week, the thought of the old to the dim horizon of years. On the day of our great Sabbath-Year we will look back.

Fifty years ago, in the right-hand corner house of the Crescent, there was a bright and happy home; for it was on that spot that the Jesuit Fathers first opened their school when, on the invitation of Doctor John Ryan, then Lord Bishop of Limerick, they came to take up College work in his well-beloved city. That school was soon transferred to Crescent House; but this Church of the Sacred Heart was only opened in 1868. Of that first Home three members now sleep in peace—Father Edward Kelly, Father Thomas Kelly, and Father Peter Foley. Two, venerable indeed with patriarchial years and rich with intellectual harvest, Father Edmund Hogan and Father Matthew Russell, are still strenuous as youths in their work for Faith and Fatherland. Within that happy home there was one central figure. In that bright picture there was one chief point of light. Through that glad harmony was heard the full tone of its master-chord. The figure which gave its character to that home, the light which gave its brightness to that picture, the melody which gave its music to that harmony, was the person of the young Rector, first

founder of this Church and College, Father Edward Kelly. Of him we cannot but speak to-day. The second of three brothers, all of them intellectual stars of the Jesuit Order in Ireland, Father Edward Kelly had already served a long apprenticeship in teaching at Clongowes before he became Rector of the Crescent. From the sowing of the seeds of Grammar to the culling of the flowers of Rhetoric, from the contemplation of the ideal forms of Mathematics to the analysis of the tangible facts of Science, he had, with brilliant success, taught other minds, and, in teaching, gained for his own mind that absolute understanding of its matter which is the special fruit of teaching. He had also given to his rare talent that strength and culture which can combine the warm enthusiasm of eloquence with the deep thought of Philosophy. But his surpassing power of intellect, his complete education as a scholar, and his exquisite refinement as a gentleman, were yet outshone by his worth and charm of character. To the sons of his religious home he was, in the words of one of them—words that were the inevitable echo of gratitude—‘Father, Brother, Friend.’ One delicate trait in his lovable disposition was an evident delight with which he would grant a favour and the gentle unfeigned regret with which he would say ‘No,’ when ‘No’ was necessary.

We need not marvel that he won the affectionate esteem of all classes. His remembrance of his friends was vivid and tender to the last. Throughout all his long life he was an ideal Priest, one who, to sin or sorrow, brings the grace or comfort of Religion with the sincere and warm affection of a noble human heart. To the destitute and to the lonely he was a generous

and faithful friend. At the funerals of the poor, which, when possible, he attended, his gentle, sympathetic face was to the sad mourners like a gleam of spiritual sunshine. His heart had learned its sympathy for those who mourn over the dead from his own sorrow. His mother died on March 17, 1866, and for many and many a year afterwards, each Saint Patrick's Day found Father Edward bearing a basket of fresh flowers for his mother's grave and, as he laid them upon the spot where the dearest love of his life was buried, there fell upon them the pure fresh dewdrops of his weeping heart. Do I seem to linger too long upon this personal portrait? Nay! that portrait has its purpose. In its meaning there is a message. What was the secret cause of the reverence and affection of the Limerick people for Father Edward Kelly? Was it in the success of his teaching? No! there was something more. Was it in his eloquence in the pulpit, in his gentleness in the Confessional, in his helpfulness to the destitute, or in his sympathy with the sad? No! there was something deeper. A clue to it was given when, during the Fridays of Lent, he preached, in Saint John's Cathedral, a course of sermons on the Sacred Heart. The cause was this. The character which I have described is exactly the sort of character which we should expect to find moulded, fashioned, finished, under the influence of a true, strong, personal love for the Incarnate love and loveliness of the Human Heart of God. It is a holiness which is most true and yet most human. It is a character whose heart is most holy when it is most human. What the Jesuit Fathers of Limerick most long for as their life's recompense,

both here and hereafter, is to find that they, like Father Edward Kelly, have had some share in fostering within the minds and hearts of Limerick the true spirit of the Sacred Heart.

Turn now in thought, my dear Brethren, to a second aspect of this Golden Jubilee. It is a time of spiritual plenty. It is a time when God gives in rich abundance a Divine Harvest to His human home. In the sixty-first chapter of the Prophet Isaias we read: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' In the fourth chapter of Saint Luke we are told that when Our Lord, at the beginning of His public life, had read this passage of Isaias, in the Synagogue at Nazareth, He added: 'This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears.' The coming of Christ was indeed 'the acceptable time' which shall last till time be done. It was and ever is the fullness of the ages. Christ brought indeed 'release to the captives and deliverance to them that are shut up,' overflowing wealth of spiritual harvest, and that great peace which is His own, all of which had been prefigured in the great Jubilee of old. Therefore, thenceforth and for ever, spiritual life is only born of Christ, and Christ only gives its life to the soul through the action of His Sacred Humanity. Thus the knowledge and love of the Human Heart of God is no mere devotion: it is the very essence of Christianity. Yet, at certain epochs, that underlying idea may be intensified and that gift of grace made greater. That

this great truth may dawn more clearly on our mind and kindle its great love within our heart, we will for some short while leave all thought of empty time or crumbling clay in order to ponder over the reality of life. The reality of life may be considered under two aspects : the power of life and the balm of life.

The power of life is in its love. Now God is love. It is out of His own love that God gives to us all our own good, and it is by our own love that God brings us to His own happiness. But, again, God only gives and only wins love, through 'The Word made Flesh.' Wherefore, again, the power of life—that power by which God raises souls from death and darkness unto the light and vigour of immortality—is in the human attractiveness of Christ. He wins our ear by human word. He wins our eye by human smile. He wins our soul with human blood. He wins our heart with human love. The balm of life is in the human sympathy of Christ. Need I tell you that human life is sad, or is it only from hearsay that you know what suffering means? Man begins life with a wail and ends it with a groan : and between the first sobbing of consciousness and the first stiffening of a corpse what pains and pangs convulse that poor thing which we call man, crushing out through swelling eyelids the watery pearls formed of purest heart-blood, and flinging them out over quivering cheeks down to the cold, callous, pitiless ground. Over the fruit-like cheeks of infancy or over the rugged wrinkles of age : over the white and sear features of want or over the loveliest bloom with a transparent radiancy of Paradise breathing through it—over them all alike come the rude tears. Tears of childhood, more real than its joys ; tears of youth or maidenhood may be but a shower that

shall pass away for a while, or may be the opening drops of a desolate life of grief ; weak tears of age or terrible tears, only by torture wrung out of the sturdy strength of man ; tears that rush quickly forth, tears that roll silently and stealthily down ; tears that lessen the depth of sorrow, or the horrible cruel tears that, burning, will not fall, but rush back with fierce bitterness to the heart, burning it, too, with drops as of fire, and heaping on it encrusted woe till it break. Tears ! tears ! Who does not know what they are ? Could he, then, know what man is who never had shed a tear ? Wherefore, ' The Word was made Flesh ' that God might weep. Our Redeemer's Heart is full of sympathy, and this is all in all to us. For in our human life sympathy is both the cause and crown of love. Behold the man ! Behold the marvellous beauty of that Face on which the Angels love to look ! Behold it bathed in tears ! Behold the human emotion of Our God ! Watch each tear as it wells forth through His lashes, to start along His cheek and fall into the dust. O Divine tear, tear of pity, and tear of love ! tear of sorrow and tear of sympathy ! Oh ! let my heart be the dust which gathers with thirsty love this dew from Heaven ere it fall to ungrateful earth. O happy dust, thrice hallowed dust, to receive the tears of God ! O Jesus Christ ! O God who art man that Thou mightst weep with me ! O Man who art God that I may weep with Thee ! O Heart of hearts ! O loving Heart, O Sacred Heart, Thou who by Thy tears wouldst soften, soothe, and win my heart—Oh ! take my heart that it be henceforth and for ever Thine own.

One last brief thought. The Jubilee proclaims the freedom of the future. To the sons of Israel it

meant that the captive should escape from bondage and the poor man be loosened from his debt. To the Christian it means the emancipation of man unto the liberty of the children of God. Wherefore, in this bright spirit, free from spiritual chain, we look forward to the future with courage. There is no need to speak in Limerick of that kind of courage, the courage of the soldier who wins his triumph or meets his death in the clash of war. The memories which linger round the old bridge and castle by the river are proofs of a courage which would not shrink under the test of battle. Nor is there even need to speak of that other and greater courage—the courage of the martyr who would face the lion or mount the scaffold rather than forswear truth or forfeit innocence. The full warm fervour of your Faith, unequalled even in faithful Ireland, would freely flow in martyr blood if blood were needed to prove its truth. But the man who is a hero in battle may be a child before a laugh or a coward before a sneer. In the world of moral matters there is a courage more true, more high, more chivalrous, more staunch than the courage which is undaunted by death. It is this moral courage which must nerve us against danger to the soul: not only against the danger of sin or soil which would make us slaves of Satan, but also against the common danger which threatens to make the modern Catholic a moral coward in his loyalty to Christ. Hold to your freedom from the moral fetters of the worldly world. That worldly world which persecuted Christ will persecute you if you are Loyal to Christ. It will not persecute you with the sword nor will it imprison you in the dungeon; but it will assail you with its scorn



and it will seek to handcuff you with its influence. This it will do in many ways, openly or more often covertly. One traitorous wile of the worldly world—one against which you have been warned by your own wise and intrepid Bishop—is to place our Faith in God and our allegiance to His Church only in the second place, so as to set Patriotism above Religion and the people against the Priest. That crafty and evil spirit would make the Catholic no longer a brother but a stranger to Christ ; for it would make him the critic not the child of Christ's Faith ; for it would make him no longer the friend but the enemy of Christ's Church.

How shall the future be in Limerick ? Courage ! that true and earnest Faith in God and in His holy Church, which is the sacred heirloom of your city, will give you light to follow the path which your forefathers have bravely trod. Courage ! that Spirit of the Sacred Heart of Christ whose human love binds human hearts not only to Himself, but also to each other, will draw your faithful hearts, with close, strong, brother bond, within His own one, true, holy Catholic Church. Courage ! a little while longer hold to your freedom in your time of trial, in the vale of tears, in this land of exile, until the great Sabbath come when rest shall be eternal, plenty infinite, freedom rapturous, and peace divine. ' Sing joyfully to God all the earth : serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before His presence with exceeding great joy. Know ye that the Lord He is God. He made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.'

## CHAPTER XVI

### *THE COMING CRISIS IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLD* <sup>1</sup>

No man can fail to see the war-cloud in the moral world. We behold, indeed, strange struggles of political forces which are the results or the harbingers of the fratricide of citizens or of the carnage of nations. But of these we do not now speak. Further, we feel the actual vibration of strange social changes ; we hear the actual rumbling of strange moral upheavals ; we see the actual flash of strange intellectual energies. But these, while strange in their own action, are still more strange in that they portend a storm more terrible than any which has ever before our day shaken to its foundations the world that is made up of the universal society of men. It is evident to all thinking minds that we are on the eve of a crisis fraught with tremendous, yet immeasurable issues. Towards it all men look ; evil men with fierce exultation ; Christian men with grave anxiety if not with shrinking dread. What is to come of it ? Who can tell ?

History tells the tale of the changeful fortunes of the human race. That tale is no mere chronicle

<sup>1</sup> Address to the Scotch Catholic Truth Society, Dundee, October 26, 1910.

of outward vicissitudes. It has its inward record of revel or of pathos, its exuberance of life or its lament of death. Our human story is not merely one of seasons that come and go or of nations that are born or of dynasties that disappear. Our human story is the intimate record of a personal life ; for the human mind has been at times crazy or at times calm ; the human will has been at times heroic or at times brutish, or at times devilish. Broadly, our human history is a very interesting novel, except that it is true, but its truth is full of mystery, full of gladness and of anguish, full of courage and of cowardice, full of hope and of despair, full of the plottings of Satan, and full of the Providence of God. This life of the world, in so far as it is the outcome of mere human nature, is for the most part bad, and its influence is for the most part evil. But this human life, so feeble of itself, has been enlightened by God with a knowledge that is His own, and elevated to a life that is Divine. But 'The Light shineth in darkness.' The worldly world will not listen to the good tidings of Christ. Thus the Church of Christ lives in a world that is hostile to its truth and rebel against its authority. Now this Church of Christ, while divine in its origin, in its mission, in its authority to teach, in its right to spiritual rulership, in its grace-giving power, is yet in many ways most human, and in all ways that are human the life of the Church must be intimately influenced by the life of the world of which its members form a part. Hence, while Christ's Church cannot err and shall not die, its vigour and its success will in a human way depend on the mental and moral character which is personal to each age. Hence, again, the human

teaching of Divine Revelation has been much developed by heresy, and the holiness of Christians has been much enforced by persecution; but the attitude of the Church is one of peace—the attitude of the world is one of war.

The great Pope Leo XIII. in his 'Encyclical' on Christian Democracy uttered words of solemn warning about the impending crisis which threatens to convulse the world in horror and disaster. Our present Pope, Pius X., has written words of equal meaning. Pope Leo XIII. speaks indeed directly about the evils which arise from extreme Socialistic theories, but he also points out that the wide acceptance of these theories is due to the teaching of false philosophy and to the intrigues of wild or wicked men. We must understand the special character of the attack which threatens the Church of Christ in order to understand the means wherewith that attack must be met.

The battlefield, where must meet the opposing forces in the approaching war, is universal. It stretches throughout the whole extent of our modern world. In olden days Barons fought their paltry feuds or countries waged their little wars or even when big armies clashed, their generals could themselves watch the movements of their men, and each soldier met his antagonist soldier. Now the line of battle may reach across a Continent and an army may include the entire manhood of a nation. So, too, in earlier days Falsehood quarrelled with Truth, or Vice attacked Morality, in different ways on scattered spots, or on different lines, under isolated leaders. In our days the principles flung forward to batter down religion and the practices that undermine it are everywhere

of the same mental make and of the same moral fashion, while the efforts of each are directed according to the method of one concerted plan. Furthermore, the attack is made on every possible point. In the social order the rights of fatherhood and of personal freedom are denied. The rights of property are savagely laughed at, the right to have a noble ambition in life ignominiously condemned. In the moral order, divorce tries to break the divine bond of marriage, and marriage will be encouraged to disobey its divine duty, while moral conduct will be lowered to the pagan code if only it offend not against good taste. In the intellectual order God is denied or at least ignored; education is barred against Religion; the philosophy that looks beyond sense, and the world that lives above matter, are jeered at as fable or hooted as fraud. There is no spot of space, there is no region of thought, there is no order of action that is not occupied by an assailant of the Church of Christ.

Now, consider who are the combatants. A fact of supreme and decisive importance in this whole matter is that the enemies of Christ strain every nerve in order to enrol under their banner the democratic forces of the world. With democracy, as a political power, we have at present nothing whatever to do. We neither extol nor depreciate it. We do not assert that it is the best, nor do we say that it is the worst, factor in human affairs. We only recognise that it is inevitable, and that it is invincible. The people always have the overwhelming number. With scientific organisation that number must have an overwhelming power. The multitude supply the physical force, and their leaders supply the brains.

But who are to be the leaders of the democracy of the world? This point is the key to the whole position of friend or of enemy. With indefatigable zeal, with scrupulous exactness, with wakeful vigilance, the anti-Christian leaders seek to win the workers to their side. So far, in great measure, they have achieved success. They command the vast majority of the working classes in France, in Germany, in Austria, in Italy, in Spain, in America, and in England. Mark, I do not say that this majority is altogether Socialist, or atheist, or even unchristian; but I do say that this majority is under the command of leaders who are no friends of Christ, and who are avowed antagonists to the Catholic Church. Their organisation is magnificent. It is becoming more and more universal, more and more scientific, more and more mechanical in the magnitude of its pressure, more and more materialistic in the exclusiveness of its purpose.

Examine their weapons. Their offensive arms are the platform, the club, the cheap bad book, and the cheaper and worse newspaper. We do not expect demagogues to prove the authenticity of the Bible; nor do we expect pious conversation from tradesmen while they drink their beer; nor do we expect exhortations to morality from editors. But we might expect that newspapers or books intended to fall into every hand should not be blurred by blasphemy, or that, at least, they should be free from moral filth. Yet, oh, horror! the working classes are flooded with a literature which is the drainage of devilish brains and putrid hearts. In order to defend themselves when we reply to their attack, our enemies misrepresent

our teaching, ignore our arguments, reiterate their disproved assumptions, and escape away in order to hurl ridicule or abuse from some other corner.

Bear in mind that, when speaking of the admission of a principle or of the adoption of a practice amongst vast multitudes of men, our words must vary in the application of their meaning according to the measure in which such principle or practice is realised in each actual man. All within that actual multitude will come under one wide, vague definition, but the strictures or the intensity of its sense will not be the same when applied to the individual members. Thus, when we speak of the enemies of Christ, we may broadly say that they re-echo the cry of the fallen angels, 'I will not serve.' Some of them may grovel before idols, some of them may batten upon pleasure, some of them will immolate themselves to Mammon, some of them will burn themselves with alcohol, and some of them will burn themselves with ambition; but they are all alike in this, that they want to be independent of Christ; they will not serve God. Amongst them there are some of the inner circle of the extreme type in whom independence is intensified into attack and in whom disregard is putrefied into actual hate. To the sober character of our northern climes it appears to be almost incredible that man should actually hate God. Yet to those who have learned intimately to know the hot character of the South it will have come as an appalling revelation that vicious or cynical men, who rebel against all moral restraint will, in their rebellion, become embittered by a spitefulness and envenomed by a rancour as fierce and as implacable as Satan; yet men, however

depraved or demon-like, must look for a principle that shall appear, at least to themselves, to justify their practice, and so these arch-enemies of Christ appeal to the idea of Freedom. Freedom! There is a freedom that is false. It is freedom from truth, freedom from right, freedom from honour, freedom from God. There is a freedom that is true. It is the freedom of a man who will not be the slave of man nor the serf of sin, nor the bondsman of dishonour, but who lovingly accepts the teaching of Truth, and who unto death will obey the command of Right. Yes! the only freedom that is true is the freedom of the sons of God. In defence of this freedom we count no sacrifice, we dread no danger. 'Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.' 'Whether we live or whether we die,' we are loyal in our allegiance to Christ.

Our defence of our Faith against modern attacks is of absolute and urgent necessity. It is indeed most true that the Church of Christ is infallible and shall not die while this world lives, yet while the Church, as a whole, is safe from error and from death, no individual Church is safe. We read in history how in early ages even great Churches of the East fell away from the parent stem. We read how a few centuries ago England forsook the Faith of her fathers, and to-day we behold France wandering away from the Light into deeper and deeper depths of darkness. The causes which may lead to the spiritual catastrophe of a nation are different. Had her Shepherds been faithful to their Faith, and had her nobles been loyal to Christ rather than to Caesar, England would not have failed, for her people were robbed of their Religion.



France is now failing in her Faith because her people have already failed in moral conduct. The Church cannot save a nation against its own will ; nor can the Shepherds of a people keep their flock safe from error or from evil if the people will not continue docile to their teaching and obedient to their law. Rather, in our days, much more depends upon the action of Christian laymen than in the ages which are gone. The quick and easy spread of knowledge, the facilities for reading books of every sort, the influence of the popular Press, have made the masses of men more inclined to think for themselves and less willing to bow before an authority whose guarantee they do not understand. Therefore, our defence must lean more and more upon the support of our Christian democracy, and that support can only be ensured by a clear, thorough, and direct appeal to the people's mind. Rome cannot fail, for Peter holds Christ's promise. But who can say that Catholic Spain shall not fail? Who can say that Catholic Ireland cannot fail? That will depend upon the Spanish people or upon the Irish people. Shall Scotland fail? That will depend upon the keen and sturdy sons of Scotland.

Our triumph is within our reach. The Omnipotence of God is always ready to help those who wish to help the divine cause of truth and holiness. However we may fail, God never fails to aid those who aid themselves. Thus every good effort achieves a divine result. It is not as though one were to fight for a merely human cause, however noble, when victory might yet crown the arms of tyranny or of treachery. Our cause for Christ must win. How far it shall

win depends upon the courage and the self-sacrifice of Christ's soldiers.

From all that I have said it must appear what the chief means are wherewith we may defend the cause of Christ against modern attack. It is evident that our greatest means, our first and fundamental means, is the spreading of Catholic truth. Now, Catholic truth is best and most securely spread by the simple explanation of our Faith and of its arguments. Cardinal Newman remarked that more good is done towards the enlightening of men's minds by the simple statement of the meaning of Revelation and of its reasons than by Controversy. Controversy is sometimes inevitable, and sometimes fruitful in good, but there is at least danger of controversy arousing an opposition which the gentle presenting of the truth would allay. Again and again we cannot hope to meet and overcome the attacks of modern error except by opposing to them everywhere and always the forces of Catholic Truth. But our intellectual forces must be organised. Without organisation our forces would remain a mere multitude; they would not constitute a Spiritual Army. That superb success can be won for Catholic Truth by thorough organisation is shown by the results which have crowned the efforts of German Catholics. I am not speaking merely of the German Centrum in its political action, but rather of the German organisation for the spreading and promoting of good, sound, useful, and instructive Catholic literature.

So far, the means which we must take remain within the order of ideas. The Truth and its organised presentment to the democratic masses are, indeed,

noble ideals, but, in order that they should enter into the world of practical politics, they require some solid facts to give them a real foundation on which to stand. Practically, Christ's work cannot be done without the toil and sacrifice of Christians. The writing or the compiling of books or pamphlets or of flying sheets, the arrangements for the distribution and selling of such literature, the management of centres of direction and of subordinate spots of working, the grouping of Committees and the determining of their functions, the actual buying and selling—all these require the sacrifice on the part of many men and women of much toil, of much time, and of much money. No such system for the organised spreading of truth can be self-supporting. It cannot hope to command an eager audience already prepared for it. It has to make headway against a loosened flood of blasphemous, irrational, indecent, yet, at the same time, attractive, and often fascinating literature. Hence we must be prepared to make great sacrifices for a great cause. Were there question of the success or ruin of your home, were there question of the defeat or victory of your nation, you would not hesitate to risk all your worldly goods, or even to risk your very life, in order to meet such peril as it should be met by a man who is a true man. Do not dream in a time of imminent danger. Do not hesitate in the presence of a crisis which shall strangely renew the world for good, or strangely damn it in evil. There is need of heroic devotedness. Stand fast! There is need of heroic courage. Forward!

No one can doubt the devotedness of the Gael. Let me quote you a passage from Ruskin. It is to be

found in 'The Two Paths.' It is a passage which I quoted nine years ago, when speaking to the Gaels of Glasgow. 'No nation has ever before shown, in the general tone of its language, in the general current of its literature, so constant a habit of hallowing its passions and confirming its principles by direct association with the charm or power of Nature. The writings of Scott and Burns, and yet more of the far greater poets than Burns, who gave Scotland her traditional ballads, furnish you in every stanza, almost in every line, with examples of this association of natural scenery with the passions. But an instance of its further connection with moral principle struck me forcibly just at the time when I was most lamenting the absence of art among the people. In one of the loneliest districts of Scotland, where the peat cottages are darkest, just at the western foot of that great mass of the Grampians which encircles the sources of the Spey and the Dee, the main road, which traverses the chain, winds round the foot of a broken rock called Crag or Craig Ellachie. There is nothing remarkable in either its height or form ; it is darkened with a few scattered pines, and touched along its summit with a flush of heather ; but it constitutes a kind of headland or leading promontory in the group of hills to which it belongs, a sort of initial letter of the mountains, and thus stands in the minds of the inhabitants of the district, the Clan Grant, for a type of their country, and of the influence of that country upon themselves. Their sense of this is beautifully indicated in the war cry of the clan : "Stand fast, Craig Ellachie !" You may think long over those few words without exhausting the

deep wells of feeling and thought contained in them—the love of the native land, the assurance of their faithfulness to it; the subdued and gentle assertion of indomitable courage. I may need to be told to stand, but if I do Craig Ellachie does. You could not but have felt, had you passed beneath it at the time when so many of England's dearest children were being defended by the strength of heart of men born at its foot, how often among the delicate Indian palaces, whose marble was pallid with horror, and whose vermilion was darkened with blood, the remembrance of its rough, grey rocks and purple heaths must have risen before the sight of the Highland soldier; how often the hailing of the shot and the shriek of battle would pass away from his hearing and leave only the whisper of the old pine-branches: "Stand fast, Craig Ellachie!" The courage of the Gael has proved itself on many another field. One other instance. Before Sevastopol the Heavy Brigade was ordered to charge. Out and forward burst and bounded the Scotch Greys; on their astonished foe they clashed; in their hands their sabres flashed like lightning, while from their hearts like thunder burst their war cry: 'Scotland for ever!'

There is a courage and a devotedness nobler than the courage of the soldier: it is the courage of the Spirit. Our cause is the cause of Christ. Our victory is secure if we be like the old type of the soldiers of Scotland. 'Stand fast!' then forward in the name of God. 'Scotland for ever!'

## CHAPTER XVII

### *THE VOCATION OF THE KELT* <sup>1</sup>

THERE is a worth that is measured by matter, and there is a worth that is measured by mind. The first is use-worth, the second is own-worth. The first may be gathered from clay ; the second is only realised in soul. There is a worth in the wealth of a gold-mine, and there is a worth in the work of a machine. But the own-worth of man is not in his money nor in his manufacture, but in himself. Nor is the true worth of a man in his likeness to a horse or to an elephant, to a nightingale or to a gazelle. Much less is it in his likeness to a toad or to a tiger, to a dog or to a devil. The true worth of a man is not even in his talent ; for talent may be turned to foul or satanic use. Nor even is it so much in what a man nobly does, as in what a man nobly is ; for he acts nobly because he is noble.

The true worth of a man is in his own-worth, and his own-worth is in the nobility of his character.

Now nobility of character is not incompatible with simplicity of life. It is quite impartial in its

<sup>1</sup> Address to the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, Dublin, October 9, 1912.

choice of poverty or of wealth, of genius or of dullness. It is quite as often found in the cabin of a moorland or in the garret of a city, as in the mansion of a millionaire or in the palace of a king. Rather, it is to be met with much more often among the humble toilers who handle the spade than amongst the crafty controllers of the Stock Exchange.

But while nobility of character is not incompatible with simplicity of life, it is quite incompatible with stupidity of life.

Mark, I do not say stupidity of brain ; for stupidity of brain is no bar to holiness of the heart, and when the heart is holy the character will be noble ; but I say stupidity of life—that is, the stupidity, whether it be of a genius or of a dunce, which imprisons its mind within sordid bounds, chains its will to low desire, warps its strength to worthless work, and condemns its life to ignoble doom. We may well brand as stupid the conduct which is wilfully opposed to common sense. Common sense means that a man's life should be worthy of a man. Now, as it is unworthy of a man that his action in a grave matter should be thoughtless and random, so much more it is unworthy of a man that his life, as it is one whole decision of awful import which hangs upon his choice, should be left to the shuffling of chance or to the whim of accident. Wherefore, the man who is wise with the wisdom of common sense will take as the object of his whole life one great aim, one definite purpose that shall be worthy of it, and to the achieving of this aim, to the fulfilment of this purpose, he will subordinate the nearer views or partial motives which sway his transient hours or direct his changeful days. This one great good aim of his whole life will

make that man's character noble and his life worthy. What that ideal of life shall be will be determined, in greatest measure, by that man's character, his circumstances, and his chances; but in some measure also by his choice.

Furthermore, beyond and above the human ideal which gives its noble simplicity or its dazzling magnificence, its spiritual loveliness or its unobtrusive heroism to the own-worth of a man's life, there may be breathed upon it a call from another world, a message of the Spirit, a vocation that is divine. So was it with Abraham and with David. So was it with Moses and with the Baptist. So was it with Peter and with Paul. So was it with Athanasius, with Hildebrand, with Loyola. So has it been with many a great man to whom God gave a great vocation. What is true of a man is, in its own way and measure, true also of a nation.

A nation is the right and inevitable outcome of social instincts and of social needs. It has therefore its bounden duty to labour for the material welfare of its citizens. But its duty does not rest there. It brings it into the higher regions of intellectual aspiration and of moral worth. It is not enough that a nation should provide bread for the body and learning for the brain. As a nation has its national life, its national ideal, its national character, so also has it its national honour, its national love.

Our modern students of social science often wander widely in their theories, because they fail to recognise a force that belongs to its inmost nature. They speak as though the multitudes of men, welded together by one influence into a nation, were only a big machine,



where colossal causes combine under delicate conditions, where swaying forces of adverse direction whirl into the unity of one resultant work. Or, if in a people's luxuriant growth or swift decay, in the mystery of its oak-like power, or in the doom of its faded hopes, they see the signs of life, they look upon it as though it were a tree that has no thought, as a soil that has no soul. Nay, even when, in the history of a nation's birth, youth, maturity, in its time of trial or of triumph, in its periods of peril or its hours of despair, in its sorrow, or its glory, in its wisdom or its mistakes, in its thrilling interests, in its tremendous issues, in its passion or in its pathos, they recognise a nation's mind and will ; even when they teach it to glut itself with pleasure and fill itself with food, to plough its fields and build its towns, to cover its soil with factories or warehouses, and to crowd its ports with white wings of canvas or with panting ribs of steam, even when they appeal to its convictions or dictate to its good sense, they yet leave out of reckoning one force—a force that may falsify all their theories and frustrate all their plans. They forget a nation has a heart. What is deepest in the heart of Ireland ?

As a nation takes its part in the living of the world's life, so does it take its share in the deciding of the world's destiny, in the fixing of the world's fate. Whether it be a result of the ploughshare or of the sword, whether it be an influence of the needle or of the hammer, whether it be an effect of barter or of books, whether it be an outcome of climatic or of commercial, or of intellectual or of sympathetic, or of antagonistic action and reaction, nations do mould each other into one sort of world in which the human

race evolves its human history. Now, the share which one nation may take in determining the world's future will, indeed, depend much upon its people's material circumstances and material conditions; but it will depend more upon that people's intelligence, and it will depend most upon that people's character. That must be the view of a mere statesman or of a mere philosopher. There is another view which is more true, more full, more final, because not born of reason but of Revelation. The nations consciously, or most often unconsciously, with mutual clasp or mutual clash, are working out into the facts of daily life the details of the plans of Providence.

But, again, as God called Samuel in the Temple, or as He called Moses from the burning bush, so did He call the nation of Israel from Egypt, so has He called the nation of the Kelt in Ireland, to do a special work in the fulfilment of a world-wide future, to follow a divine vocation in the reconquest of the world unto the truth and love of Christ.

Solid facts and shrewd common sense will form the foundation upon which this assertion shall securely rest. We hold that the vocation of the Kelt has been for fifteen centuries—and shall be, up to the end of all the centuries, if only the Kelt remain faithful to it—to carry the truth of Christ throughout the world, and, with the toil of his brain or with the outpouring of his blood, to keep it fresh and fruitful on every spot of earth. The facts are, on the one hand, the natural character of the Kelt, and, on the other hand, the supernatural kind of the action of the Kelt in making history. For evidence of this we turn to simple lessons taught by the wisdom and the warning of the past.

Never has a supernatural vocation so clearly or so splendidly dominated all else within a nation's life as has the Faith of Christ elevated and ennobled the character and the aspirations of Catholic Ireland. There is no need to point out what is, indeed, open to the eyes of all : how from the very first the Faith took such deep and hardy root within the heart of Ireland as to spread at once throughout the land the spiritual fragrance of its innocence, and to carry even to other shores sublime seeds of spiritual harvest. Throughout these early ages of peace, when her learning and her holiness shone brightly amidst the darkness of the Western world, Erin's brightest glory was in her Faith. Nor did that glory remain shut in by the surrounding seas upon the green soil of this island of scholars and of Saints ; but Erin's holy sons and daughters brought the brightness of their Faith to bless the nations of Europe. The traveller who lingers amongst the records, or Churches, or treasures, or tombs of England, of Scotland, of Belgium, of Holland, of Germany, of France, of Italy, or of Spain, will everywhere meet with sacred memories of Irish apostolic Saints. Even when the ages of persecution brought gloom and desolation to our land, the Faith of Ireland became only more beautiful for her tears, and more fruitful for her blood. True Martyr, she sacrificed wealth, prosperity, freedom, education, culture, all natural gifts and graces that make life dear to man, rather than forsake the Truth revealed of God. More than this, through a marvel of God's supernatural Providence, the Martyrdom of Ireland became the means of bringing the light and life of the Faith to the vast Continent which divides the Eastern from the Western Ocean, and to the Island-

Continent which reposes under the Southern Cross. Truly, as it is by God's will that kings reign and nations are born or die, so truly is it by God's call and blessing that the Kelt has traced the supernatural character of God's wisdom upon the history of the world.

There is also a warning written in the records of our past. Had Ireland apostatised, had she accepted the creed of her conquerors, she would doubtless have enjoyed a material prosperity equal to that of England. Even in spite of the terrible difficulties and disadvantages which they had to encounter and overcome, the talent and the character of the sons of Catholic Ireland have enabled them, both in peace and in war, to win a foremost place in the intellectual and military triumphs which have built up the British Empire. England's victories have been most often won by Irish soldiers, and the highest honours in her Civil Service have been often held by Irish students, while the eloquence of her Bar, or of her platforms, or of her Parliaments has been quite outshone by the eloquence of our Irish orators. How much more complete would not their triumph have been had our people been untrammelled in the rivalry of the pen or of the voice or of the sword! But our forefathers put their Faith first and above all else. They honoured and loved God even more than they honoured and loved their Fatherland. Their noble ideal and their unconquerable allegiance to it dictate to us our duty. If we are to be worthy of them we must follow in their footsteps. It is the warning echoed from our glorious past.

Pause not to harken to the welcome and the warning of the future. Its warning is in the challenge which

it brings. The modern infidel world has declared war against Christ. That war is intellectual. In a way and measure unknown before, the attack is becoming more and more pointedly, more and more desperately directed against Catholic Truth. On the one hand, science is almost monopolised by men whose chief interest seems to be to seize on every new-found secret of Nature, and on every new-born theory of their own fancy, in order to twist them into arguments against the Word of God ; while, on the other hand, pleasure and wealth tend more and more to blur or even to efface within men's minds the very idea of the supernatural. Nor is this intellectual poison distilled only for the refined use of the learned or the wealthy. It is also poured out in rough draughts for the plainer palates of the masses. This war is intellectual. It is also universal. Its attack is directed not merely against the individual man, not merely against the masters and the masses, but even against the nation. Its triumph has been so far so supreme that of all nations there is not now left one single nation thoroughly, profoundly, and emphatically Catholic except one. That one true Catholic nation is Ireland. Surely this points clearly to the fact that Ireland has been chosen by God's supernatural Providence to be the vanguard of His Truth in her battles against the errors of the modern world. That vocation of the Kelt, which in the past made the Faith of Ireland the triumphant champion of the Catholic Church, is our vocation still to-day. It is our right and privilege to be the first and foremost to accept the challenge of the future. We take up the gauntlet flung down by the enemies of Christ's Church.

The challengers have chosen the weapons. As the war is intellectual, so the chief weapon of the modern infidel is his literature. This weapon is handled with scientific skill. That weapon has its double edge. On the one side it has its keen edge of argument. On the other side it has its subtle edge of immoral passion. Our assailants, more or less wilfully, most often rather more than less wilfully, but with consummate cunning, misunderstand our Catholic teaching, twist or distort our arguments, and ignore our answers. For the educated they have books of insidious philosophy or of poisoned science. For the ignorant they have pamphlets of flying sheets put together with catching phrase and fascinating appeal, winning the blind passions and bewildered wits of the mob by exaggerating their wrongs, deifying their rights, and denying their duties. Further, with even greater success, they use the edge of immoral appeal. Many years of long and wide experience of different peoples, of different classes of men, and of different kinds of character, have proved to me with overwhelming evidence that Faith is most often loosened in its hold, or thwarted in its coming, by immorality. Many years ago when I was at Laval, in France, there was an election of a Deputy to the French Chamber. An Atheist Red Republican stood for the seat. He was defeated. But he was a very wealthy man, and he was well understood how to employ atheistic tactics. He spent one thousand pounds in circulating immoral pamphlets amongst the people. He again presented himself at the next election, and was returned by a large majority.

The second weapon of our assailants is their organi-

sation. Their attack is organised with supreme skill, with unremitting watchfulness, and with desperate energy. Their organisation does not merely provide its literature in overwhelming plenty, but brings it into the homes and hands of all. It does not merely leave it on the table of the drawing-room, or on the shelves of the study, but it carries it into the tenement of the tradesman in the crowded city, and into the lonely country-cabin of the labourer.

Our chief weapon must, therefore, be our Catholic literature. But first we must hurl back from our shore the inroads of atheistic and immoral books. We must take all lawful means to resist the invasion of these satellites of Satan. Should such literature come into your hands shrink not, but ruthlessly destroy it. A literature that is foul or devilish has no right to live. It is our right, it is our duty, to tear it to tatters or fling it to the fire. We need not hesitate to dash from our people's lips the poison which their enemies proffer to them. But in the stead of what is bad, we must provide a literature that is wholesome, interesting, instructive, Catholic. Such literature must be, above all, intellectual. Amusing anecdotes, pretty or pathetic stories, however good in tone, can only come in the second place. There is little use, for the high purpose of our vocation, in fascinating the fancy or even appealing to the heart unless we have first convinced the brain.

Our second weapon must also be our organisation. In the use of this weapon we may learn much even from our enemies. '*Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*' Our efforts will be of little avail if we merely aim at providing good literature. We cannot rest satisfied

when our supply is equal to the demand. We must not merely encourage that demand. We must invite, urge, or even create that demand. Organisation, in order to be perfect, must be enterprising, insistent, indefatigable, ubiquitous. Local committees, organisers, inspectors, are essential parts in any complete, efficient, lasting, and successful system of literary campaign. Thus may we hope to unite and direct all our forces to a triumphant issue under the banner of Catholic truth.

Thus we bid our welcome to the future. Our Kelts have got both the talent and the courage of the true soldier. That fearless dash, which has so often brought them through desperate battle to magnificent success, and that heroic endurance, which has so often changed defeat into victory, are in our Keltic blood. We have the most absolute confidence not merely in the supernatural character of our vocation, but also in the Divine blessing which rests upon our arms. Even our human hopefulness has its own high sanction. Surely we cannot dread the conflict nor doubt of our success when we follow such leaders as the Patriarchs of the North and of the West, his Eminence Cardinal Logue and his Grace the Archbishop of Tuam.

But we must not ignore the seriousness of our duty, nor lightly overlook the gravity of our responsibility. It is only some few thinking men who are able to read the signs of the times of threatening tempest. The most terrific upheavals and the most disastrous cataclysms which have convulsed the social world have burst upon unsuspecting or heedless peoples, and their crude horror or abysmal result



was only understood when, long afterwards, the trembling survivors ventured to look back. When the first rumblings of the French Revolution began to arouse some faint alarms, how few men realised that this movement would inevitably result in one of the worst outbreaks of brutish passion which ever reddened with innocent blood and blackened with Satanic crime the pages of human history. The bitter reproach and the stinging sarcasm which Demosthenes hurled at the Athenians who laughed and loitered in the market-place when Philip of Macedon was at their gates are well deserved by most men in moments of supreme social peril. We need not speak of those men who live only for the day, whose only preoccupation is to fill their bodies with food, and to fill their pockets with money, or in their empty hours to glut themselves with pleasure. But even many men who have high ideas of personal worth, of patriotic honour, and of their bounden duty to God, are yet content, in dangerous days, to watch and to wonder and to become uneasy, and to wait until it is too late. Men of sterling good sense, of brave heart, and of true Christian devotedness will, indeed, watch and wonder, but they will not wait. They will work. The social world is now tumbling down a precipice, gathering more and more terrible momentum, more and more frantic velocity, as it goes. Do I appear to exaggerate? Look at the appalling object-lesson presented to us in France, where the lethargy of her Catholic people has allowed the nation to drift into a mood of mind and phase of character so stubbornly opposed to Christ, so perverse as to be, humanly speaking, hopeless. But, to come from what is vague

and wide to what is distinct and definite, look at that point which is the key to the position of the opposing armies of Christ and Antichrist. It is the school. Everywhere our enemies are making every effort to snatch the child from God. Only some months ago, in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, a little independant State where the Catholics are in a majority, the Freemasons have succeeded in passing a school law of anti-Christian character. Everywhere the watchword of Antichrist is the same. It is the school. Now, to exile God from the school may, in principle, appear to be a theory that is merely negative. In practice it is an action that is positive. The school that is without Religion is a school of irreligion. The child, the youth, the man who is educated without Christianity, is educated to be an infidel. Yet, even in England, some short while ago, an irreligious school law had almost passed. It did not pass. It has only been postponed. The danger is at our door. We must watch and we must wonder. But we must not wait. We must work. We must teach our people their Catholic Faith, and we must call on their Catholic courage. In one way or in another all must work. Some will give tithes of their toil ; others will give tithes of their talent ; others will give tithes of their wealth. All must rally round the standard of Christ.

We stand face to face with an imminent and perilous crisis in the history not of Ireland only, but of the whole world. It is a time that must mark an epoch in the centuries, a time when the nations will swing wildly back to Paganism unless they hold more firmly to the Faith of Christ. It is a time of approaching war, when the forces of Heaven and of

Hell shall clash in dread and decisive battle, a time when the weak or hesitating must stand aside, a time when the brave and resolute soldier must show all the courage of his character, all the nobility of his endurance, and all the heroism of his self-sacrifice. It is a time when we Irish Catholic Kelts must prove that we are the worthy sons of our martyr-forefathers, ready to hold fast to our Faith and to follow Christ, if needs be, unto the death.

May we not look forward to welcome the verdict of after ages? In centuries to come, may not the sons and daughters of Catholic Ireland turn to gaze in admiration and gratitude upon our beloved people, who are now fixing the fate of the future by their noble conduct in these our own actual difficult days? May not the unborn generations of our race, hereafter, with noble pride, grateful sympathy, and with holy love, exclaim: 'God bless the true and devoted Irishmen of those great old days! They fully understood, bravely accepted, and nobly carried out the vocation of the Kelt.'

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *'THE WINDS AND THE WAVES OBEY HIM' <sup>1</sup>*

#### *MIRACLES OF OLD AND MIRACLES OF TO-DAY*

To the child who plays with pebbles on the summer beach, or gathers nuts in autumn woods, or peeps into the opening bud in the spring-tide, or watches the winter snow-flakes fall, those fundamental truths are evident, which the philosopher finds, flashing in the unimaginable speed and splendour of the unending stars, or thrilling in the vibrations of the infinitesimal atoms, or written within the heights of the infinite azure, or throbbing within the heart-beat of the resounding ocean. To the child indeed, this evidence comes unconsciously with the simple showing of its sunshine. To the philosopher it comes with the full consciousness of its inevitable proof, and with the mysterious awfulness of its eternal law. But to both the truth is visible, and its power absolute. Not any other truth is more plain to the simplicity of the child, or more profound to the contemplation of the philosopher than that this vast universe, made up of

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address to the Catholic Truth Society, Scotland, delivered at Edinburgh, October 29, 1912.

such different, yet interdependent kinds of things, working with such antagonistic, yet harmonious kinds of action, having within it such essential needs of mutual clasp and mutual clash to evolve or to control sorts of entity and of energy which yet cannot create each other, moulded, measured, modulated into an order that is unthinkable in the intricacy of its details, yet dazzling in the serene simplicity of its unity, must be the work of an infinite power which has realised in actual fact an ideal of the infinite Artist God.

Thus Nature proclaims the glory of its Maker. But He, who drew all things out of absolute emptiness by the mere power of His Word, holds all things in uttermost dependence upon His will. Nature's Maker is Nature's Master. Hence, God can alter, modify, perfect, or destroy whatever is in Nature, and can control, change, intensify, or eliminate whatever is in energy. Surely, this is a wisdom which transcends all thought ; simple enough for the common sense of a child, yet sublime enough for the wonder of a philosopher. Yet all that Nature tells us about God is within the ken of natural reason. Reason knows nothing about God beyond what is made manifest in His outward works. Now, were God to wish to send another message unto man than that which He has already told through Nature, were God to condescend to reveal some secrets of His own inner life, and to speak and to express a new appeal of His own infinite love, what way should He take to make His supernatural message known to man ? Might He not, with the omnipotent influence of His intelligence, enlighten from within the minds of men, so that each man should directly and immediately hear God's

Word from God? Yes! that might have been had God so willed it, but that would not have been quite in keeping with man's nature. It is more natural and more befitting that God should guide and rule the human race as one people, and that His providence, whether natural or supernatural, should work on men through men. Thus He has chosen to send His Prophets and His Apostles. But, in His wisdom, He could not send men without their divine credentials. He should affix His divine seal to their testimony. He should give some unmistakable sign that they were no dreamers, nor imposters, but the true ambassadors of His Truth. This sign must be supernatural—that is, above all Nature's powers—in order to show that it is God Himself who speaks. Such a sign, in the intellectual order, is a knowledge of what is unknowable to man, and that is a prophecy. Such a sign, in the physical order, is a fact impossible to Nature, and that is a miracle.

Now mark well that the material world must have a moral end. The only good in unintelligent Nature is in its usefulness. The marvellous forces which steady the earth or speed the stars, the marvellous beauty which clothes the flowers or illumines the clouds, the marvellous life that buds or breathes upon the earth or in the air, or in the ocean, can have no worth unless in so far as they are means which man may use to make or win the worth that is of the soul. A material universe would be useless, and therefore impossible, were there not an end set to it, which should be an aim worthy of its Creator; nor is any aim worthy of our infinite God except the manifestation of His own truth to created minds

and the winning of created freedom to the clasp of His own uncreated love. Much more must it be true that the works of God’s supernatural action must have for end and aim a supernatural worth. Again, conversely, an end, an aim of supernatural worth, will require a supernatural means for its accomplishing or fulfilment. Therefore, since, as a matter of fact, God has elevated our nature to the supernatural order, it is most fitting that the natural order of things should be not only subservient to the supernatural, but that also the supernatural should dominate the natural not only in excellence, but also in efficacy; not only always in its inner influence, but also sometimes in its outward action. Hence the great St. Thomas of Aquin, ‘ the angel of the schools,’ most truly speaks of miracles as ‘ opus naturalissimum ’—a work which is the most natural of all; for, indeed, nothing can be more accurately or more fully in accordance with Nature than that its Maker and its Master should use it as He lists, for His own high aim, and hold its potency and its power obedient to His own command.

A miracle is understood to be a physical result which natural power could not effect; and therefore a result which is due to the efficacy or intervention of a supernatural cause, and therefore a work that is divine. Here we may briefly put aside a difficulty that has no real difficulty. If a fact is above and outside the power of Nature, it is only to be attributed to God; for, any power, whether it be material or immaterial, less than the power of God, would be within the order of Nature, and consequently it could not do a supernatural work. Furthermore, God, in

His wisdom, could not tolerate that any strange interference of demons should obscure the evidence of His credentials, or make it impossible for man to recognise the real supernatural kind of His own action, set as a necessary seal to the divine testimony of His own truth. We speak of a miracle as an outward action, a physical result, a material fact. We do not speak of those inner marvels of God's own immediate and direct doing, when He illumines the mind with the radiance of supernatural knowledge, or breathes His own actual inspiration into the human will. These are indeed works of wonder, but they belong to that inner spiritual life in which the supernatural is constant, normal, and inevitable. These are not exceptional but ordinary. A miracle, on the other hand, is an exception to the ordinary law. Its very purpose is in its being an unwonted work, a result intended to be a credential for something unusual ; a sign from Heaven whose very proof is in this that it breaks in with divine power upon the ordinary powers of nature, so as to impress the mind with a special message given for a special reason by God to man. From the very idea of a miracle it must follow that a real miracle is always and only done for some great, good, moral end. It follows, too, that everything in the object and circumstances of the miracle will be holy. Those strange things done, or said to be done by wizards, witches, spiritualists, or devils have the taint of the Evil One upon them, and there may be always found in them some trace of the trail of the Serpent. Between them, and a true miracle, there is an abyss, a difference not in mere degree, but of characteristic kind, a difference of opposite orders. Now, to the



mind that is not blurred from within by passion or by pride, nor distorted from without by a distorted perspective of science, it is almost self-evident that there is a God ; and to the mind that recognises the existence of God, it is almost self-evident that miracles are possible. To men who deny the possibility of miracles, we may answer : All your theories fall to pieces at the first touch of a contrary fact. Miracles are facts, therefore they are possible.

The evidences of Christianity are so dazzling in their splendour, so all-enfolding and so inevitable in their application, so vast and so varied in their multitude and in their kind, that there are few minds able to follow to the end of their analysis, and still fewer minds able with synthetic grasp, to concentrate all their rays of truth into one clear white light of almost angelic intelligence. The very existence of the people of Israel, one vast prophecy, the visions of their Prophets realised in actual fact in after ages, the unfolding of their religion, and the unravelling of their history up to the very day of the Messiah ; the life and character of the Christ, unknown, uneducated, unaided, who promulgated a Revelation of such exquisite moral purity, delicacy, loveliness, of such marvellous practical wisdom, comprehensiveness, adaptability, of such masterful command, inexorable yet merciful, imperious yet touching, exacting yet winning, of such transcending power, loftiness, depth, grandeur, beauty, as to bring the light of Heaven down to earth and lift earth’s lowliness up to Heaven, and with the inflexible rigour of absolute logic, yet with the ravishing sweetness of an infinite charm, to be an evident reflection from the face of God ; the spread

of Christianity, its mature wisdom from its infancy, its youthful buoyancy along the Ages, its victories in defeat, its robust growth through Martyrdom, its sinlessness surviving sin, its humility outliving pride, its conquest over time and space in obedience to the Prophecy of Christ ; these are, assuredly, proofs that are facts, and facts that are proofs, surpassing the living glitter of human genius and the dead eloquence of natural force, that lead us securely to the gates of Heaven.

No one human mind can well survey with accurate balance the comprehensiveness of this Revelation. To different minds, different aspects of these marvellous evidences will most appeal. Amongst these marvels there have been miracles. For four days had Lazarus been sleeping his death-sleep, when, at the command of Christ, ' Lazarus come forth,' Lazarus came forth alive. When on the inland sea, 'mid the whirling fury of the tempest, the maddened waves were overwhelming the boat, the sleeping Christ, roused by His terrified Apostles, uprose and commanded the waves and the winds, and straightway there was a great calm. Those miracles which are recorded in the Gospels have for the truth of their reality the divine guarantee of the Word of God. They have also, even independently of their divine authority, the highest human sanction which book or testimony of man can have. If those books are not admitted to be truthful and accurate histories of fact, no history has more weight than fiction, nor is any book better than a fable.

However, a question which is often eagerly, sometimes anxiously, and occasionally querulously or even flippantly, asked, is not about the miracles of the

Gospels, but about modern miracles, and, can one reasonably believe in the miracles at Lourdes? It will help us to come to a clear understanding, if we distinguish and separately discuss the different truths which are involved in our one conclusion. First, I take it as an admitted fact that miracles are possible; that should God so will, He can work a miracle at any time of the world's life, or on any spot of the earth's surface, as He chooses. We can scarcely be so grotesquely silly as to applaud the police placard in a French village: ‘*Défense à Dieu de faire des miracles en ce lieu.*’ Secondly, we can examine the actual fact. Has it really happened? Now, it must be clearly, frankly, and emphatically laid down that a miracle, to be admitted, must be proved. A miracle is, by its very idea, an exception, a fact outside of ordinary facts. Hence, men are most reasonable when they say: I do not deny that miracles are possible, nor do I either assert or deny that there are miracles at Lourdes, because I have not sufficient proof to enable me to form a definite conclusion on one side or on the other, but I decidedly mean not to admit a miracle unless there be sufficient reason given for it. That is quite reasonable and quite right, but that attitude of mind may go too far. It may deny what it does not know. Thirdly, there is an attitude of mind which is absolutely unreasonable. It denies without proof what it does not like to know. It is an attitude of mind which has been well described by John Ruskin as ‘the groundless denial of all that seems to be groundlessly asserted.’ It is an attitude of mind which is irrational to the very extreme of stupidity. Yet, strange marvel of our flippant age,

it is the attitude of mind of many of our greatest scientists. In their own domain they are absolutely careful neither to assert nor to deny without proof. When they get outside their own domain, they are absolutely careless. They do not wait for proof. They do not want proof nor facts. They deny without knowing why or what they deny. That is neither scientific nor in keeping with common sense. We approach the subject from the mere ordinary shrewd standpoint of common sense in face with facts. We will now proceed to think about the facts at Lourdes.

We begin by the narrative of the alleged facts at Lourdes. The Immaculate Conception was defined by Pope Pius IX., on December 8, 1854. On February 11, 1858, a little girl, fourteen years of age, named Bernadette Soubirous was taking off her sabots and her stockings in order to wade across a little mill stream to join her younger sister who had gone across before her with another girl. Suddenly, she heard a noise as of a great wind. She looked around and saw that all was still, except where a wild rose-tree, which had caught along the rock, was tossed about as in a tempest. She approached and saw a lady, beautiful beyond thought, standing on the rock above the rose-tree. Instinctively the little girl took her beads and began to tell them. Bernadette could not keep her secret. Her sister told their mother, and their mother, like a good sensible woman, told her daughter Bernadette that it was all imagination and forbade her to go there again. But on the Sunday the mother, at the prayer of the other girls, allowed Bernadette to go back. A number of girls went with her, and the miller and his mother were present, and saw her

in a strange ecstasy. On the 18th, the mother allowed her to return in company with two respectable women of the town. Bernadette saw the Lady, who appeared to be quite young, as Bernadette guessed, like a maiden between fifteen and eighteen years of age. The Lady told her to come back for fifteen days. On the 19th, her own mother and a number of women went with her, and saw her in ecstasy. On the 20th the mother and some hundreds of people were present and beheld her in ecstasy. On Sunday the 21st, Dr. Dozous, an incredulous scientist, went with her, examined her pulse and breathing during her ecstasy, but found them normal with no trace of nervous excitement. Bernadette was subjected to a very severe ordeal. She was brought before the police authorities, brow-beaten and bullied, but her answers were so straight, so coherent that all were, if not convinced, at least silenced. On the 22nd two policeman were sent with her; the Lady did not appear. The critical folk laughed and sneered. They said that her apparition was afraid of the *gendarmes*. On the 23rd she was again in ecstasy. Let me give you a description of her in ecstasy. It is in the words of M. Estrade, until then an incredulous Atheist. 'It was the early dawn. About two hundred people were grouped around. Amongst them were many who came to scoff or to amuse themselves.' 'Bernadette,' he writes, 'knelt down. As she passed her beads through her fingers, she raised her eyes towards the Grotto with a look of expectation. Suddenly, as if a light from Heaven had come upon her, she made a movement of wondering admiration and appeared to be quite another person. Her eyes brightened. They became

brilliant with strange mystery. Upon her lips a smile dawned of seraphic sweetness. An indescribable charm and grace transfigured her whole being. Bernadette was no longer Bernadette. Instinctively the whole crowd of men uncovered their heads and reverently bent before a divine power. After the first transports of the child at the sight of the Lady, she took the attitude of one who listens; then of one who speaks. Her movements, her face, reflected all the phases of an interview. She trembled with delight when the Lady spoke; when the Lady was silent, she bent down and was touched to tears. The ecstasy lasted about one hour.' On the 23rd Bernadette was again in ecstasy. On February 25, the Lady told the child to drink and to wash herself in the water. The girl went towards the River Gave, near by, when the Lady called her back, bade her to find the water close below the rock. The girl wandered about until, at a gesture of the Lady, she scratched with her little fingers a dusty spot of the dry soil. Some little drops came trickling forth, wherewith the child, at the Lady's command, bathed her face, and of which she drank. That spring, which never had been there before, now yields each day 122,000 litres of water, pure and clear and cool, but not medicinal. On the 26th the Lady again appeared. On the 27th Bernadette had again a prolonged ecstasy, during which the Lady told Bernadette to tell the Priests that a Church should be built on that spot. This was the most difficult part of Bernadette's task. The incredulity of the atheists or the opposition of the bad, were not so extremely careful in their inquisitions, or so extremely exacting in their sifting of proofs, as

were the clergy. On Sunday, 28th, over two thousand people beheld her in ecstasy. The apparition again took place on March 1 and 2. On March 3, Bernadette came quite confident of seeing the Lady, and an immense crowd were present, but there was no apparition. On March 4, the last of the fifteen days, while between fifteen and twenty thousand people were present, the Lady again appeared to Bernadette. Each day after, Bernadette went to the rock, but the Lady did not appear to her until March 25. On that morning, Bernadette went with great hope to the sacred spot. She found the Lady waiting for her. In answer to Bernadette's intense appeal to know the Lady's name, the Lady answered 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' Poor little Bernadette had no idea of what the words meant, and she had great difficulty in remembering them. She even was unable to pronounce accurately the word 'Conception.' On April 19, Our Lady again appeared to Bernadette, and afterwards, and for the last time, on July 16. Bernadette did not then know her Catechism. She had not then made her First Communion. Indeed it was very difficult to prepare her for her First Communion. She was very dull, very child-like, very simple, quite as fond of fun as any other girl, quite unemotional in her piety, and absolutely hum-drum in all her habits. She was over seventeen before she had learned to read and write with tolerable accuracy. In her twenty-second year she entered the Convent at Nevers, and was a simple, sensible, ordinary matter-of-fact, good, pious Nun until she died in her thirty-fifth year. Is that the life or the record of an impostor or of a fool?

We have now to grapple with hard, dry-as-dust facts. The question as to the reality of the apparitions of Our Lady to Bernadette is decided by the reality of two facts: the first fact is the truthfulness of Bernadette; the second fact is her sanity. If these two facts are really real facts, she was neither deceiving nor deceived; neither the conscious and deliberate inventor of a lie, nor the unconscious and deluded victim of foolish fancies. If this be so, her testimony is true: it is a simple telling of what she knew and a simple record of what she saw. As to the first fact, the truthfulness of Bernadette, there can be no doubt. She was a simple, candid, frank child. All who ever met her, kinsfolk, friends, or strangers, recognised in her a character that was open, guileless, and transparent. She was naturally dull, and unusually ignorant, a quite unsophisticated peasant girl. Hers was the very last mind capable of inventing a gigantic fraud that should mystify mankind. We know from history, past and present, how almost impossible it is, even for the cleverest rogue, the subtlest swindler, or the most accomplished knave, to create and carry on through long years, all over the earth, a colossal scheme of mere deception. Was this child capable of inventing an imposture, cleverly planned, worked out with unfailing skill, held to for over twenty years without one single mistake, an imposture, moreover, that should shake the intellectual world, and produce within the moral lives of multitudes of men, such deep, far-reaching, and lasting results of holiness? That idea is too absurd. When there is question of fraud, there must be some motive for it. Men have done strange things for greed of gold, and even stranger



things for thirst of notoriety. Bernadette, in all her life, never accepted money. When gold was sometimes slipped into her hand or into her little apron, she flung it indignantly on the ground. Presents were poured in upon her by pious people, as offerings in honour of Our Lady. They were always and absolutely refused. Her family was extremely poor, yet they would never accept of any gift. Not even when in actual want would they take the food brought to them by simple, kindly country folk. Neither in her character was there the slightest trace of vanity, or feminine seeking after notice. Rather, she was quiet, retiring, careless of the crowd. Her games or home duties were superior to the interests of excitement which so often fascinate the fancy of a girl. More than this, she never spoke of her visions, unless when questioned, and even then only reluctantly and briefly. She especially disliked being interviewed. Had she been an impostor, her evidence must have broken down under the shrewd, clever, and persistent cross-examination to which she was constantly subjected. Doctors, police authorities, magistrates, school professors, clever men of every clever class, although almost always persuaded beforehand that her statements were groundless, became invariably quite convinced of her genuine sincerity. Five months after the last apparition, the Bishop of Tarbes officially appointed a mixed commission of clergy and laity to investigate the matter. Bernadette was examined on her oath. Her answers were so simple, so natural, so straightforward, so candid, so redolent of truthfulness, that the unanimous report of the commission was that doubt as to her sincerity was absolutely

impossible. There is a moment when fraud must fail, deceit draw back, and folly become subdued. It is the moment when life is done, and death is near. It is a moment of supreme awe, of dread solemnity, when all else is hushed at the lifting of the veil, in the presence of eternity, when the soul is about to stand before the Judgment Seat of God. On December 12, 1878, twenty years after the apparitions, Bernadette was dying. In the death-room stood the delegates of the Bishops of Tarbes and of Nevers, the Mother General, and her Council. The dying Nun was again questioned on her oath. This time, contrary to her wont, she was eager to be questioned. In the face of death, she swore before the Great High God of Heaven that her tale was true. She died exclaiming, 'I have seen Her! yes, I have seen Her!' Who can doubt of her truthfulness?

Was Bernadette mad? It is the plain way of putting the question as to the reality of the other fact—namely, Was Bernadette, however truthful, yet the victim of vain fancies or of a diseased brain? Mental disorders, in which unreal ideas are taken to be facts, may be broadly divided into three classes. In the first place there is the case of nervous strain, when a shock to the nervous system, or a gradual undermining of its healthy working, will produce hysterical effects. These are generally subjective. They are concerned with the state of the victim. These patients imagine: for instance, that they cannot walk when yet they are perfectly sound, or they imagine that they cannot eat, when in secret they will devour too much. With that class we have nothing to do. There is a second class. These are dull, stupid minds that fade into idiotcy.

Neither have we to think or talk of them. The only remaining class is of those disordered brains who are overstrained, over-active in a diseased way, whose fancy pictures unreal realities. It is the case of mental illusions, of hallucination. Could Bernadette have been one of these? Let me put before you two pictures, one the picture of the wild visionary, the other the picture of Bernadette.

It did not come at once, that wild craze. It never comes in childhood, nor even in girlhood. It came afterwards and very gradually at the beginning. The young woman was evidently hysterical, strange, with fitful phases of excitement, and fitful moods of depression. She became too silent, and her silence was sullen; or she became too talkative, and her talk was rambling and incoherent. There was a predisposition in the body, and in the brain, towards something abnormal, unbalanced, unhinged, morbid. The nervousness, the excitement, or the moroseness grew gradually to be more marked and more uncontrollable. A crisis was at hand. The crisis came. There was a wild, mad illusion, the absolute forgetfulness of becomingness and even often of decency. The defiant rejection of advice, and much more, was there impatience of control, the persistent and absorbing fixedness upon one staring mad idea. Whenever the strange, weird suggestion came, the crisis followed fatally. There was a grotesque, yet gruesome absurdity in what that mad thing spoke or did. There was the haunting idea, the never-ceasing absorption, the concentrated craze, the unprovoked irritability, the exasperated looking for offence, the sour supremacy of sheer selfishness, the utter callousness towards affections, even of the

dearest home. Lower and lower depths ; the moral sense is lost ! Those lips, once so pure, are defiled with words of filth. Those hands, those limbs, once virginal, are now the hands and limbs of a female animal. It may all have begun with what appeared at first to be trifling, but it went on with the automatic precision of a machine. If not checked and cured in its early stages, which is rare, it results in madness, violent at first, until the excitement burns out the brain, and if she live long enough she has become only the remnant of a human brute. That picture is drawn by the experts of mental diseases in women.

Turn from that sad, weird picture, to gaze upon a picture where the form is angelic, and where the light which falls upon it is the pure, bright, sparkling sunshine of the sky. She is only a simple country girl. She is very sensible, obedient, modest, quiet, except when she has a merry game with other girls, and then her laughter ripples out with a ring of absolutely true-toned merriment. She loves to skip and dance, even when alone, on the path through the fields ; but she has no imagination. Even when she says her prayers, she is not emotional. Her piety is unmistakably and irremediably earnest indeed, but prosaic. She is a dull child and finds it hard to learn, much less to invent. The idea of inventing anything could not possibly get inside her little head. She never thought of anything outside her plain prayers, her plain life, or her plain surroundings, until one day a beautiful Lady spoke to her. She had no idea of who the Lady was, but somehow a sense of reverence, unknown before, came upon her, and she felt that she should say her beads. There was no excitement, no troubling of her untutored

child-soul, but only a serene joy, like the sunshine of springtime, and a serene calm like the repose of a summer sea. That vision came when she never thought of it. It came again when she was waiting for it. Sometimes, when she eagerly expected it, it did not come. There was no law in its coming. The Lady came or did not come as she listed. The mood or phase of the girl's temperament had no influence, neither had the surroundings. She was a hardy little girl except for her Asthma. Her physical and mental condition were so balanced, so staid, so downright matter-of-fact, that she had no nerves, no poetry, no enthusiasm, until the face of the Lady lit up her face with a beauty and a glory which was not her own. Did these marvellous apparitions turn her head? No! She could run off at once to skip and to play or perhaps, despairingly, to try to spell out her Catechism. But this poor little girl became a most unwilling victim of a blaze of public notoriety. Everyone knew that she could not tell a lie, but the wise people thought that she must be a fool. Her tale was so very strange. There was quite a public uproar. The Prefect of Tarbes ordered the Mayor of Lourdes to have her examined by a commission of three selected Doctors, and if—which was a matter of course—they found her to be insane, they should lock her up in a mad-house. The Doctors came with their verdict ready beforehand. To their utter astonishment they found that the little girl was quite as sane as themselves and probably both more sensible and more truthful. This little girl grew up to be a good, simple, ordinary Nun, who did not like to be interviewed but who always kept unflinchingly to the truth of the tale which she told. The greatest

experts in mental diseases have declared that either Bernadette was mad or that her visions were true. If she were mad, those gentlemen must be also mad. Sometimes an expression of the face tells the truth better than can the words which fall from the lips or even the very outward material facts that are around us ; for these outward things come from the clay that is outside while the expression comes direct from the soul within. Look at the face of Bernadette. Remember first that Bernadette gave to the world a type of beauty only vaguely, if at all known before, yet one equal to the Madonna of any of the great Masters. Her ideal mirrored from the vision which she had seen, was absolutely distinct, detailed, and definite. She had tried to portray this image, but her feeble accents failed to arouse an accurate answer in the artist's mind. When she beheld the marble statue of the great French Sculptor, M. Fabisch, she exclaimed, ' It is beautiful, but it is not She ! Between it and Her there is the difference which there is between earth and Heaven ! ' When she was commanded to give a sitting to the sculptor he asked her how the Lady looked when she said ' I am the Immaculate Conception.' Simply the child arose, joined her hands, and looked towards Heaven. Listen to the artist's words. ' Nor Fra Angelico, nor Perugino, nor Raphael has ever painted anything so full of tender sweetness, and yet so full of deep thought, as the expression on the face of this simple and unaffected child. Never while I live shall I forget the enrapturing charm of that expression. In Italy and elsewhere, I have contemplated the Masterpieces of the greatest Artists, but in none of them have I found such seraphic sweetness, or such ideal charm.

Each time that I asked her to take the same position, the same expression came to change, illuminate, and transfigure that child-face. The sight of that face was quite enough to touch one unto tears.’ It was a faint reflection of the expression of the face of the Lady whom Bernadette had seen. That was not the face of an impostor, nor of a fool. No ! no ! no ! That was no veiled leer of cunning ; no wild , weird look of lunacy. It was the simple, child-like, truthful, sensible, holy little Bernadette Soubirous.

What about the reality of the Miracles at Lourdes ? Facts are facts. There is an old French saying, ‘ Il n’y a rien d’insolent qu’un fait.’ Indeed, a fact has a dreadfully downright way of giving the lie direct to false assertion or to wrong denial. We will take our facts. First, however, we must call upon some plain principles to guide us in our search. A miracle, in order to be recognised as true, must be knowable. It must be knowable in itself, in an absolute sense ; and it may also be knowable to us, and in a relative sense. Now, in order that a miracle should be a real miracle, there is no need that it should be knowable relatively to everyone. A real miracle may be only intended by God to be known to those immediately concerned, or to those who are fully aware of all the circumstances. There has been many a real miracle, at Lourdes and elsewhere, which was not wrought for the knowledge of the whole world. But while we dare not logically deny these miracles, we recognise that they are not meant for us. Wherefore, we do not speak of them. We do speak of miracles that are knowable to all honest folk who take the trouble to fully inquire into the facts and who then tell the

truth. Again, reflect that, as Saint Thomas teaches, a fact may be miraculous as to the very substance of the fact, when the result is simply and absolutely beyond and outside Nature's power, as when Lazarus was raised from death to life ; or a fact may be miraculous as to the mode or manner of the fact, when the result might absolutely have been brought about naturally, but not as it is actually brought about—namely, at once, and without any use of adequate natural means, as when the fever was straightway cured at Christ's Command. In the diagnosis of a miracle, we must most carefully consider separately three different points. First, the fact which existed beforehand. Secondly, the fact which existed afterwards. Thirdly, the relation between these two facts, whether or not the first fact or real state of things could have been changed into the second fact by natural power. Thus, take the first fact : Lazarus was dead ; for his body was in the state of decomposition. Take the second fact : at the mere call of Christ, Lazarus was at once living ; for all saw or touched him, and he lived afterwards, stout and hale, for many a year. Take the third fact : no power of Nature can suddenly and without any natural means change a rotting corpse into a healthy man. Come to the facts at Lourdes. These facts are facts. One fact of dazzling evidence is that those who deny the reality of the marvellous cures at Lourdes, never went to see them ; and that no one who has ever honestly inquired into the reality of these cures has ever failed to be convinced that they are facts. All the Doctors who have studied the facts admit that the cures are real. The only question is as to the



nature of these cures: whether, namely, they can be explained away by secret agencies of an unknowable nature, absolutely contradictory of known science, or whether they must be admitted to be the work of God.

There is no possible loop-hole open for doubt as to the accuracy and severity of the investigations into the reality of the facts. The early miracles at Lourdes were most rigorously verified by local Doctors and by local Ecclesiastical Boards. Later, the number of cures became so great that it was impossible for any central authority to continue to control the action or decision of distant or unknown Doctors. In 1882 a Medical Board of investigation was established at Lourdes. The patients were obliged to bring the certificates of their own Doctors, and they were again carefully examined on the spot by the Medical Board of Lourdes. In the case of a supposed miracle the patient was immediately afterwards examined by the Medical Board. Thus the first fact—the previous state, and the second fact—the subsequent state, were absolutely proven. This Medical Board does everything in the open daylight of public knowledge. Especially, the Board is open to any Doctor whatever who may wish to enter, and examine for himself. Between 1889 and 1909, 4297 Doctors, of whom 869 were foreigners, assisted at the examinations of patients. Their names, including many of the most eminent names in Medicine, are on the Register of the Board. Each year between two and three hundred Doctors go to Lourdes to examine the facts. One year the number amounted to about 700. It often happens that there are as many as eighty Doctors present. Not

unfrequently, when the cases are very numerous, the President invites some of the stranger Doctors to volunteer to act as official Doctors of the Board. The only condition for this is that the Doctor show his credentials. The Doctor is never asked what his religious views may be. Is there in the world, or has there ever been, any medical body so impartial, so varied, so numerous, so well equipped for the investigation of details, so anxiously earnest to be full and accurate in their diagnosis? You cannot go beyond that. The Medical Profession has pledged its science and its honesty to this, that the cures at Lourdes are facts.

We now turn to the third fact, the cause which brought about the sudden and supernatural change from sickness unto health. Here, I must give you a reference where you can find all these facts proven with documentary evidence, where you will also find references to other authors. I speak of a book written on the official invitation of the Bishop of Tarbes, to be presented to our Holy Father, Pope Pius X., on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the definition of the Immaculate Conception. The book was written by Monsieur l'abbé George Bertrin, Fellow of the University of France, Doctor of Literature and Professor at the Catholic Institute of Paris. The book is entitled 'L'histoire Critique des Événements de Lourdes' (Librairie Lecoffre, 90 Rue Bonaparte, Paris). I quote some facts. First, Madame Rouchel, of Metz, had lupus in the face, which horribly disfigured her, and there was one deep hole in the right cheek, and another in the palate. She was cured instantaneously. She came back the next year to

show that the cure was still perfect. No trace of the lupus could be found by the Doctors. Second, Made-moiselle F. Courtout was so delicate a child that she was only baptized when eight years old, and only made her First Communion when seventeen. Several of her brothers died of tuberculosis. Dr. Ferran, of the Hôtel Dieu Paris, and Surgeon de Necker, found that she was suffering from grave spinal disease, technically called 'de Pott.' She went to Lourdes in 1895. Before leaving, she was examined by Dr. Chérié who certified that the spinal column was twisted at its base, and shaped like the letter S, having two huge curvatures, one above at the back, and one below in front. On August 25, she went into the bath at Lourdes. When, a few days later, she returned to Paris, Dr. Chérié again examined her and certified, first, that the spinal column was quite straight and, secondly, that there only remained a slight projection of two vertebrae at the base of the spine which, however, was of no practical importance. Third, Made-moiselle Léonie Chartron had in vain consulted three of the greatest Doctors of the world—Piorry, Bouvier, and the famous Nélaton. They could do nothing for her. She was a hunchback, and her extreme deformity was the result of paralysis and was accompanied by suppuration of six vertebrae, with fever. When put into the bath at Lourdes she was instantaneously cured, and her hunch had completely disappeared. Dr. Gagniard, who examined her, certified that she was completely cured, and he defied any Doctor to explain this cure by any possible natural means. Fourth, Madame Marie Louise Champs went on the National Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1892. Dr.

Arnould, a very distinguished specialist, examined her before she left. He certified that she was suffering from an old Arthritis (*Coxo-femorale*), which rendered it almost impossible for her to stir her left leg. At Lourdes she was instantaneously cured when receiving Holy Communion, and was able to walk with perfect ease. On her return to Paris, Dr. Arnould certified that the left hip was perfectly normal and that no trace of the disease remained. She could walk, bend, kneel, and rise as easily as anyone else. Fifth, there is an institution at Villepinte, Paris, for girl consumptives. Those only are admitted who are certified to be in the state of advanced Tuberculosis. They are divided into three classes: those in the third and last class being irremediably doomed to death. During a certain number of years, a certain number of these girls had been sent to Lourdes. It was a common saying amongst them, that once they enter the hospital they had only the choice of going to Lourdes or going to the Cemetery. Of those who went each year to Lourdes some were cured and some were not cured. It was generally the worst cases that were cured. Take one year, the first which I came across. It was the year 1896. Fourteen girls, in the last stage of consumption, were sent to Lourdes. Out of that number, eight were at once and permanently cured. Two of them became healthy, good Nuns; another became a house-servant in France; another went to business; another became a housemaid in London; another became a school-teacher in Russia. The seventh is married, and the eighth is a Professor of Gymnastics! Of the six who were not cured, four died shortly after, and the

remaining two are since dead. Sixth, on August 29, 1894, Mademoiselle Constance Piquet, of Soulaïres, had been suffering from cancer in the breast for three years. Dr. Martin, of Lèves, had refused to operate, and certified that the cancer was incurable. On above date she went into the bath at Lourdes. On leaving the bath, after a couple of minutes, she found that the cancer had disappeared. She was brought to the Bureau de Constataions, where between fifteen and twenty Doctors, amongst them Dr. Regnaud, Professor at the School of Medicine of Rheims, looked in vain for any trace of the cancer. Seventh, Joachine Dehant, of Liège, had a malignant gangrene sore, nearly a foot long and about half a foot wide, on the right leg, from the knee to the ankle, reaching to the very bone; it had eaten away the tendons and the muscles, and all the flesh. The foot had become twisted inwards, the knee was immovable. She had suffered from this sore for twelve years. The whole system had been undermined. When twenty-nine years of age she only weighed 27 kilos, or  $4\frac{1}{4}$  stone. Her friend, Léonie Dorval, helped her to undress in the bath at Lourdes, but when she saw the dreadful state of her sore, she said, ‘ It would be unpardonable rashness to put you into the bath.’ Joachine answered, ‘ I take all the responsibility on myself. Help me to sit down on the edge of the bath and I will put myself in.’ ‘ No ’ replied Léonie. ‘ It will kill you.’ But she at last consented. This was at 4 o’clock in the morning. There was no cure. ‘ I will come back again,’ said Joachine. At 9 o’clock she re-entered the bath. This time she did not take off the bands that covered the sore. After the bath, Léonie, while helping her

to dress, accidentally touched the sore without causing any pain. She again touched the sore and still there was no pain. She took off the bandages. The leg was perfectly sound and whole. The flesh was clean and solid, and there was only a slight red mark on the skin to remind her of the spot where once the ulcer had been. But the hip, knee, and foot were still deformed. Next evening at 9 o'clock she went again into the bath. She and her friend beheld the foot with gradual uniform movement become straight. The knee got into its socket, and the hip returned to a healthy state. She suffered intense pain so that she fainted. When she came to herself she was a perfectly sound woman. She left her crutches at the Grotto. Within one hour she followed in the procession, and, although one of the last to start, she was one of the first to reach the Church. Immediately afterwards her whole system developed to extraordinary health and robustness. When at Lourdes she only weighed 27 kilos, about  $4\frac{1}{4}$  stone. A few years afterwards she weighed 75 kilos, about  $11\frac{3}{4}$  stone. The certificates and the medical proofs of all these miracles are referred to in the Work of Monsieur l'abbé Bertrin. Can imagination, in one moment, set a diseased spine straight, or can hysteria, in one instant, cure a malignant cancer, giving back the flesh that had rotted, or can it straightway heal and restore to healthy breathing a cavity in the lung? We do not indeed know all that Nature can do, but we do know with absolute certainty that there are some things which it cannot do. We have to choose between two alternatives: on the one hand to imagine without any reason that there are strange powers in Nature of

which we know nothing, and which would directly contradict all that science tells us about Nature; or, on the other hand, to admit that God is God, the Maker and Master of Nature, and that ‘the winds and the waves obey Him.’

We may have to face the sneer of the conceited cynic, the laughter of the vulgar buffoon, the exasperation of the human beast, or the jibe of the brainless blasphemer. Christ has had to face all that before. Christ has conquered all that wild and wicked attack. We are Christians, and we must expect that, as the world hated Him, so will the world hate us. We need not mind that. We come from of old, and the Revelation which is within us shall not die till time be dead. Our life is not of the earth, earthy. We live in the supernatural; we know that the Spirit of God lives within us. We know that the Spirit of God works within us and around us. We are not surprised to find that God is wonderful in His Works to-day as in the days of old. Nay, rather, we recognise His sweet, kind, masterful Providence in this, that, whereas the world has become so pagan in thought and so passionate in conduct, there should be sent from Him to us a new strange message of wonder, a wonder of truth and of innocence, a wonder of love and of purity, a wonder of His own dear, sweet, wise, stainless Mother, recalling the world to truth and holiness through her message given to a simple child at Lourdes, and through her works of healing and of holiness done upon the spot where she deigned to appear as the ideal under God of what is most beautiful in Nature and of what is most heroic in grace. It is the lesson told by Our Lady through Bernadette Soubirous.

## CHAPTER XIX

### *THE GLOOM OR SUNSHINE OF CONSUMPTIVE HOMES*<sup>1</sup>

FOR years, or rather for centuries, a dismal gloom had been thickening over many of our Irish homes—the gloom of a fatal disease which fastens upon the young and even upon the robust, and festers with malignant growth, until it blights strength, buoyancy, beauty, hope, life.

What a sad sight it is to see an opening life, like some fair flower that has been blighted at the very budding of its bloom, fading fast away in early girlhood! When in the summer noon-tide she wanders slowly about, perhaps for the last time, in the sunshine, amid the flowers, where the birds sing and the bees hum, you notice that the once tall, graceful figure has become shrunken and bent, the cheeks have lost their peach-like softness, and their rose-like red, the lips are white and parched, the large eyes have lost their lustre and reveal a faint, sad message, like a hope that is fading beyond the distant horizon never to come back. As you gaze at that young

<sup>1</sup> Address on the occasion of the Opening of St. Finnian's Chapel at the Sanatorium, Peamount, Lucan, Co. Dublin, on Sunday, April 27, 1913.



form amid the flowers in the sunshine, you hear, mingling with the merry voices of bee and bird, the hard, harsh sound of the consumptive cough which heralds the near approach of death.

Look now upon another picture. Encircled at his desk by papers and documents, which are actual causes and evidences of the great work which he has done and is still doing in business as well as in philanthropic zeal, the young clerk sits and toils and thinks. He has toiled and he has thought without real reward or recognition on the part of the great firm for which he has thought and toiled, with scant acknowledgment of the services which he has rendered from his boyhood during ten or fifteen years. His work has powerfully helped to win for them a magnificent income of money, and an enthusiastic popularity amongst the poorer people for the company of merchants who have spent most blessed and needed wages in the locality, who have enabled the workers of hand to reap a harvest of material comfort that allows them to lift their children and their children's children to a higher order of social civilisation and which has given them the means of spreading the results of their happy success throughout the land they love. He has thought and toiled. He has toiled and thought. Had he been a worker of hand instead of being a worker of head, he would be still what he was years ago, healthy and robust ; but his toil has been of the brain, at his desk, in the germ-tainted air of an office, and one result of it is that his work has gained for him, with endless hours of overtime, but with only, for his intense brain-toil, scant crumbs of wages, a life doomed to death. As he stands up, you behold

a tall broad-shouldered man, well shapen and well knit, whose frame must once have been straight, stalwart, muscular, and robust ; but it is now only a drooping skeleton. His clothes hang loosely about his emaciated bones. His gaunt cheeks are barely covered with tight pallid skin, and seamed with sunken rifts. His eyes are buried deep in their sockets whence they look at you wearily and wistfully. His breathing is fast and feverish, almost gasping. His voice is low and hollow, with a strange weird tone in it as though one heard an echo from a grave.

When this gloomy pestilence works such havoc in the mansions of the great ones of the world, in the comfortable abodes of the professional or business classes, in the humbler dwelling-places of those who struggle through the broad middle stream of life between secure wealth and threatening want, what must not be its dire results when it finds such fruitful soil to welcome its seed as it everywhere meets with in the putrid atmosphere and prolific dirt of the homes of the abject poor. There this fell infection hangs about the rafters, creeps into the garments, crawls along the floor, and floats in myriad microbes upon the poisoned air. It is sad. It is heart-breaking. It is horrible.

Think of what the sunshine is to the earth ! Without the sun's warm rays, this earth of ours were only a dark and sterile mass of ice, where no living thing could breathe and over whose monotonous solitudes of changeless snow the weird winds would wail. The sun dispels the gloom, severs the mists, melts the snow, ripens the soil, freshens the sea, warms the breeze, and purifies the air. The sun

enriches the earth with the green of the grass and the gold of the corn. The sun gladdens the earth with the loveliness of the flower and the music of the bird. The sun renders the world a befitting home for the generations of men who see with its light, who are strengthened by its warmth, who rejoice in its beauty and take courage from its promise, until death comes to close their eyes to its splendour and to chill their hearts to its touch.

Through the gloom of the dread disease which had brooded over our Irish homes, there has dawned in our day a sunshine of health. It is written, 'As the sun when it riseth to the high places of Heaven, so is the worth of a good woman for the welfare of her home.' The dark night of consumptive ravages is being dispelled and its death-dealing germs destroyed, through the bright and blessed influence of a good woman who has enhanced the nobility of her rank by her broad, deep, human sympathy for suffering, by her indefatigable zeal in combating and overcoming the wide-spread horrors of consumption, by her magnetic power of drawing others to share devotedly in her chivalrous enterprise, by her genius for organisation, by the dignified calm of her silence under discourteous and unwarranted aspersions, as well as by the high courage and dauntless determination with which she brightly faces difficulties and triumphantly carries on to wider success her blessed work for good.

Look out over the ripening harvest! Contemplate the change for good which is being brought about within the desolated homes of our country! The fresh, free, pure air breathes through the open cottage windows, shaking away the heavy poisoned atmo-

sphere, bringing full, deep draughts of sunny health where pestilence had brooded, creating on the very spot where consumption had reigned new life, new vigour, new hope, new joy. To this glad victory of sunshine over gloom other causes have also contributed. In the first place, we must offer out emphatic tribute of honour and of gratitude to the Doctors. A Priest has, from the very nature of his office to succour and console the sick and the dying, intimate opportunities of knowing the kindness and zeal of those other Physicians whose vocation is to minister to the wants and heal the infirmities of the poor, frail, clay shrine which is the living partner of the poor, frail, human soul. To me has been given, by a strange Providence, a varied and thorough experience of hospitals, nursing homes, and sanatoria in other lands as well as in our own. To my own personal experience has been added the experience of very many others who have travelled, who have been close and shrewd witnesses of facts, and who have thought over what they have seen. Nowhere, not even in scientific Germany, is such high medical skill, such constant watchfulness, or such ungrudging generosity, given by Doctors, as is lavished by our Irish Doctors, and especially by our Dublin Doctors, upon the sick poor. Their whole-hearted sympathy commands their devoted helpfulness, and their high sense of honour rigorously forbids to them—what alas ! is often found elsewhere—a brutal experimenting, in the name of science, upon the helpless bodies of the ignorant people who may be made the easy victims of their new drugs or of their exploring knife. Next to the Doctors, but as the inseparable companions of their health-giving vocation, come

the Nurses. Those whose days, like mine, are rapidly failing towards the twilight 'and after that the dark,' will well remember how, not so very many years ago, a real Nurse was an unknown being. An absolutely new order of things, which our grandfathers could not have dreamt of, dawned upon the astonished world when educated, refined, highly trained, and warmly sympathetic women thronged in multitudes to do, with the Doctors, what, without them, the Doctors could never do. It was, in the human order of things, a new creation. The motor-car, the electric wire, the telephone, have brought comfort or convenience, money or amusement. The Nurses have brought relief to the suffering, health to the sick, and often, even to the dying, life.

As pioneers, or needed auxiliaries, or necessary benefactors, or influential agents in this great work, we recognise the members of the Ladies' Health Association. They teach and spread abroad the principles of true hygiene, or they bring into the poor home their practical demonstration of wise precaution and wholesome comfort, or they awaken the slumbering world to the sense of responsibility, or they win those who are over busy with fun or fashion to understand that it is happier to dry tears than to laugh, or they show to those who are idolaters of Mammon that it is a more blessed thing to give than to take, and that money given to the poor is never lost, for 'blessings like birds come home to roost.'

There is a secure store for our harvest. The assurance of the good which shall last into the future is epitomised in this Sanatorium. The Sanatorium

itself gathers together from unhealthy homes or unfortunate surroundings many patients smitten by the first strokes of consumption, but who may yet, by experienced skill and kindly care, under wholesome circumstances, be restored to ruddy robustness. But the Sanatorium does not merely mean the removal of the patients from baneful influences. It also means their living amongst influences most helpful to health. Beyond its advantages from the mere point of view of medicine, it further induces restfulness in the stead of fretful preoccupation, calm in the stead of worry, and, in the stead of depression, it arouses that hopefulness which gives courage and, with courage, new and near chance of success. Doctors and others acquainted with the strange phases of consumption are well aware what potent charm to aid recovery of the body is contained in the stimulant of a cheerful mind. What old Virgil said of the almost vanquished rowers in the boat-race who yet made one last brave effort to redeem the victory, 'They can, because they think they can,' is still more true of those wasted sufferers who, if they despair, are doomed to death, but who, if they make a plucky fight, have tenfold chances of recovery.

Yet more, far more even than all else, this Chapel of St. Finnian, patron of this district, the opening of which we are assembled to-day to celebrate, brings to the Sanatorium a boon of a higher and nobler order ; for, while it aids, intensifies, and consecrates the useful natural means afforded by material skill or moral courage, its efficacy passes outside the sphere of Nature's power, and reaches to the most sacred sanctuary of the soul. The action of our Catholic

Religion can create a patience and a resignation deep as the calm of eternity. It can create a trustfulness in the Providence of Our Father in Heaven more secure than all anticipations of human hope. It can create a happiness which, as it rests upon the divine promise of a Heaven hereafter, so does it transfuse each detail of our transient hours with the reflected radiance and nearing rapture of the Day that shall soon dawn in its glorious sunrise never to set in gloom or tear, or sickness, or sorrow, for ever and for ever more.

Oh! the glorious merry sunshine that dances along the ripples or floats on the foam of the river, or sports with the spray of the ocean or transforms the green of the field into emerald, or transfigures the heather and gorse of the mountain into purple and gold; or clothes the clouds of the morning in robes of scarlet, or changes the gloom of the sundown into crimson and amber; or woos and wins the blush of the red, red rose, or idealises the white lily into an exquisite emblem of innocence; or melts the snow, or dries the mud; or attracts the thrush to the topmost branch of the tree, to pour forth its whole heart in an ecstasy of song and in a canticle of thankfulness, or prompts the chant of the meek pigeon hidden in the shade, or fills all the soaring arches of the Cathedral nave in the wood with the meditative murmur of bees; or glints and glistens and sparkles down through the foliage to make the rugged stem of the oak smile with quiet contentment; or uplifts with hope the tender shoots of the garden and of the meadow, or bows down the stately heads of the corn in gratitude for the wealth of their golden grain; or calls out the

loud laughter of children at play, or brightens the wrinkles of age with the light of reverential trustfulness. But, oh ! how much more bright and more beautiful and more blessed that other sunshine, of which the sunshine of the sky is only a material figure and type, the sunshine of human life, which can bring from Heaven health to the sickly body, courage to the desponding heart, and happiness to the pilgrim souls of men !

Oh, blessed be the sunshine of earth ! Oh, blessed be the sunshine of Heaven ! Oh, blessed be those who recognise and receive with deep thankfulness to God the blessings of both ! Oh, blessed be the harbingers of the sunshine, Lady Aberdeen, and her generous associates ! Oh, may this twice blessed sunshine, blessing those that give and those that take, shine more and more brightly, more and more beneficently, throughout this dear old land we love, making all true good to flower and to fructify, until we become, more and more truly, more and more thoroughly, a race 'of brave men and pure women,' a race of hardy healthiness, a race of vigorous enterprise, a race of prosperous peace, a race of mutual broad-mindedness and big-heartedness, a race honourable towards men and faithful to Christ through the prayers of His dear Mother, of Saint Finnian, and of Saint Patrick.



## CHAPTER XX

### *WORTH*<sup>1</sup>

WHEN the glorious rippling rays of the sunshine flash through the throbbing and enamoured air, they may capriciously play with the crests of laughing waters, or they may change the green of the leaves to emerald, or they may concentrate their radiance into a mysterious intensity of beauty as they kiss the diamond or the ruby, or they may clothe the rose with a colour which no art could rival, and win from it a fragrance which no eloquence could woo. But what is the use of it? What use is the loveliness of light to the river except that the sunshine may unravel into freshness some poisonous germs? What use is the sunshine to the leaves except that it purifies the air which they breathe and uplifts the branches that bear them? What use is the sunshine to the ruby or to the diamond except that it buys them a bigger price in the markets of fashion? What use is the sunshine to the rose? Ah, yes! much more; for the rose owes its beauty to the sunshine, and it is only the sunshine that can win the perfume of the

<sup>1</sup> Address to the Staff and Students of University College, Galway, on the occasion of the Inauguration of the Academic Year, November 2, 1913.

rose. But what is the use of beauty or fragrance? Is there any use in the sunshine beyond its usefulness? Is there any use in anything except in so far as we can eat it or drink it or make clothes of it or turn it into any other mean service in which matter may drudge? Is matter, whether it be clay or mud, dust or dirt, whether it be liquid gas or solid, whether it be pretty or ugly, offensive or sweet—is matter to be the only and ultimate standard of use? Is there no use in anything above usefulness?

In our great industrial cities, where usefulness is an idol and money its incense, the magnificent streets are aligned with palaces more noble than the palaces of nobles, banks, insurances, town-halls, museums, and even shops. Not only has wealth been squandered upon them, but the choicest genius of art has been bribed into dreaming out their fairy-like symmetry and gigantic proportions, while the toil of thousands of hands has laboured for years to make the dream of the artist a fact in mortar and stone. But what is the use of it? It is pretty. It is beautiful. It is magnificent. But what is the use of it? Ah! perhaps as an advertisement for a bank or as a befitting shrine where fat alderman may meet to divide the civic profits. Now you have the meaning of it. The usefulness of those stately buildings is not only in their service but also in their beauty. They are not beautiful because they are useful, but they are useful because they are beautiful. Thus, too, the usefulness to a nation of a true hero comes from his nobility; the nobility of his mind or character does not come from his usefulness. What is usefulness? What is value? What is worth?

The idea of value may be very briefly diagnosed. Value is some absolute real type and token of usefulness to which all other sorts of usefulness can be compared, and by which their relative usefulness may be gauged. Gold is, amongst civilised nations, the absolute standard and measure of value, to which standard and measure may correspond such representative tokens as bank-notes, shares, or bonds. This value is only an artificial expression and gauge of usefulness, under which title it may be therefore classed.

Mark well, that in treating of a matter like this, we must carefully weigh and most accurately measure the most subtle sense of words. The riot of the motor-car or the satanic shriek of the steam-whistle only faintly and feebly represents or echoes the tumult of our modern life, or the clamour of its cravings. This din and turmoil has clashed in upon literature, so that flippant slang or reckless speech usurps the thoroughfare of language. We must try to catch the true sense of words, and to cling to words of sense. In the newspaper as in the novel, on the platform as in the street, stupid words and slipshod grammar disconcert the thinker and amuse the mob. Philosophers without philosophy, and philanthropists without principle suit their words to their meaning, and arrive at their conclusions by their arbitrary choice. We will try to tread the simple, old-fashioned track of plain words and inevitable meaning. Usefulness means what good a thing can do. Value means what good a thing can buy. Worth means what good a thing is.

When we speak of a thing as useful, we are not speaking of whatever worth it may or may not have of itself or in itself: we are merely speaking of it

as it is a means of gaining some other good which we directly desire. Now a means, considered precisely as a means, has no other good than the good towards the attainment or realisation of which it is a means. If we consider the means in itself, we are looking at it under a different aspect. These two aspects—that of the good which a thing has in itself and that of the good which a thing has as a means towards another good—may be verified in one and the same object ; but they are logically distinct, and therefore, if we would avoid a logical blunder, we must consider them apart. If you maintain that there is no good in a certain thing beyond its usefulness, you must logically admit that there is no good in it except in so far as it may be a means towards some other good. Some modern philosophers call themselves Utilitarians, because they hold that utility or usefulness is the only standard of good, of right, or of worth. But if usefulness be the only standard of good, there can be no other good except usefulness. Therefore, there is no good in anything beyond its usefulness. But if all things are only useful, they have no good in themselves, and there is no other good for which they may be useful. Hence it follows that all things are only means towards an end, and that there is no other end towards which they may be means. Hence, it further follows that all things are useless. Should you object that things may be useful towards each other, you are only making the difficulty infinite ; for you are only passing from one useful means to another useful means, and so on for ever. But if there be no real end towards which a means may be useful, this means is of no use ; and if there be some

real end towards which a means may be useful, that end must have some good in it beyond its usefulness. Thus, again, if all things are only useful, there is nothing for them to be useful to. Does all this seem to be mere playing with words? That is exactly the point. Utilitarians are not Utilitarians. These modern philosophers, however marvellous in talent or fascinating in speech, have no training in thinking and no accuracy in expression. This absurdity is so evident that these philosophers, while saying that usefulness is the only standard of good, do really admit another and different standard of good, and that standard is pleasure.

Pleasure cannot be the standard of worth. In the first place, the mere amount of pleasure cannot be a standard of good, because there are different kinds of pleasure, the amounts of which cannot be measured or gauged by the same standard; and, in the second place, the different kinds of pleasure are differentiated and set in relative rank by another standard than pleasure,—that is, by their own relative and varied excellence. Thus material, intellectual, and moral pleasure have their worth determined by their own excellence in relation not to the gratification of desire, but to the judgment of reason. Herbert Spencer and other teachers of this Utilitarian school have devoted wonderful talent and enormous labour in order to prove, what any average child knows without being taught, that the pursuit of what is highest and noblest in happiness coincides with the pursuit of what is truest and best in worth. That is quite plain and absolutely inevitable. The sophism of Herbert Spencer, which has led him through all

his useless toil, is that, to use a very homely phrase, 'he puts the cart before the horse.' He holds that the highest happiness indicates the truest worth. Well! that is quite true; but what does Mr. Spencer draw from that? Mr. Spencer continues, 'Therefore the highest happiness is the standard of truest worth. Behold the fallacy! Because the highest happiness and the truest worth are inseparable, Mr. Spencer concludes that happiness is the standard of worth. No! Happiness is the proof of worth as its result and consequence, not as its cause or criterion. Happiness is the natural and, in the end, inevitable consequence of worth. Happiness is not creative of worth, but worth is creative of happiness. In other words: a thing is not good because it is pleasant, but pleasure is good if it be worthy. Therefore pleasure is not the test or standard of good, but good is the judge and criterion of pleasure.

In the order of dead matter, as in the order of herb or plant or tree, usefulness towards a higher good is the highest function, and that usefulness is brought about by the action of physical forces. Usefulness is also the highest function in the animal order. But this usefulness is secured by the action and reaction of twin attributes of animal life, pain and pleasure, which tend to maintain the fitness and preservation of each several kind and the harmony of them all. Yet all this usefulness is the outcome of some inherent good which is realised in everything that exists and works. But beyond all usefulness of a mere mercantile sort, there is, even in these lesser things, a good of another order. In the sunshine or in the sea, in the star or in the flower, in the bird or

in the brute, there is a majesty, charm, or beauty which can only be called useful in a poetic sense, because it ministers not to matter but to mind.

When we enter into the order of human life, we find ourselves in a new and nobler world. Infinite horizons of intellectual realities, unknown before, dawn upon our enraptured vision. Endless spheres of spiritual sunshine, otherwise undreamt of, reveal to us a universe of truths that are beyond and above usefulness and a mystery of moral majesty which is beyond and above pleasure. Man or woman is not a mere thing of use nor a mere thing to serve our pleasure. Our outward actions, even our high intellectual or moral powers, may indeed be helpful to others in noble ways or in noble ways give delight ; but the inner life, the character, the soul itself, never. The true worth of a man is not in the money lodged at his bank or locked up in his safe ; nor is it in the broad fields and stately castles which he may be by law entitled to call his own ; nor is it in the apparel which one wears, even though it rustle with richest silk or flash with rarest gem ; nor is it in orders or decorations, proofs of noble pedigree, or tokens of high success in peace or war, that rest upon the heart ; neither is it in other ornaments that rest upon the head, even though amongst them there should happen to be a crown. All these things are outside trappings. They cannot make, they do not reach, the true worth of woman or of man.

Riches are often the reward of spiders of Hell. Fine clothes or flashing jewels often cover or conceal a body crippled by nameless deformity or eaten up with nameless disease. A medal may repose over

a heart that is putrid, or a coronet may grace the brows of an imbecile. Some of the most beautiful of women have been the most accursed of human serpents. Some of the most brilliant of men, clever wits or successful soldiers, great financiers or powerful statesmen, fascinating demagogues or despotic kings, have been great as vipers or great as vultures, great as tigers or great as swine. They have not been great men.

Nor is the true worth of a man even in his intellectual greatness; for, as the true worth of a man is not in the superiority of his physical powers as a brute, so neither is it in the superiority of his mental powers as a Satan. The true worth of a man is in his own worth—the worth which is in the noble moulding of his own character and in the noble mastery of his own soul. One cannot command the world's wealth nor control the world's fame. One cannot change one's stature, nor even, perhaps, alter the circumstances in which one's lot is cast; but one can own a worth which is above time and beyond space, towards which all peoples should look up and before which all other power should bow—a worth which may make a peasant more noble than a prince or a lowly maiden more admirable than a queen. It is a worth that lifts man or woman above the world.

Before all creation one may stand, defying its defeat, conquering its conquest, over-ruling all its chances, and combining all its vicissitudes into one magnificent success. It is the worth of a man who owns his own self, mightily ruling the kingdom within himself, resistlessly developing his own inherent powers, superbly harmonising his own subordinate



faculties, grouping, shaping, intensifying his own efforts into the use, order, and beauty of a life which, as it is independent of, and superior to whatever is beneath or around it, so does it reach up to a worth that is divine, a worth self-given and self-owned, a worth to which none other can compare because it is a worth of God. That worth is yours if you will have it. No power of earth or Hell can bar your passage to it. It is the worth which is your crownship of earth, as it is the charter of your right to Heaven. It is the worth of your own free choice and of your own triumphant self-ownership and self-evolution. It is your very own worth of worth ; the worth which is your own great, grand, true, beautiful self under God.

## CHAPTER XXI

### SOLDIER, SAINT, AND MARTYR<sup>1</sup>

*Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a Kingdom.*—Luke xii. 32.

TO-DAY, this new Church at Fairfield is being dedicated to the worship of the Most High God under the invocation of His Soldier-Saint, Sebastian, who died, a Martyr of Christ, seventeen centuries ago, at Rome, under the pagan Emperor Diocletian. To many minds it might at first appear a strange contrast, that, on this spot of England's soil, in the midst of the whirling echoes and teeming traffic of Liverpool, at this moment of England's life, in the full blaze of her twentieth century civilisation, our attention should be turned back to old times that are almost forgotten except by the student or historian, and drawn away to wander through the streets and Catacombs and palaces of Imperial Rome. But the very contrast has its deep significance. Its opposing aspects are different phases of one great fact, and its varied lessons are harmonious utterances of one great truth. We

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Opening of the new Church of Saint Sebastian, Fairfield, Liverpool. Feast of Saint Sebastian, January 20, 1914.

will study this contrast in its differences and in its likeness.

Look back to those old days of the third century. The iron sword of the legions of Rome had conquered her enemies all over the earth. The iron prow of her galleys had swept her rivals from the seas. The iron grasp of her law had enslaved under her sceptre the nations of the then known world. That marvellous Republic had absorbed into itself whatever power or talent, whatever wealth or culture, whatever energy or education, whatever physical prowess or artistic excellence were to be found amongst men. It had become consolidated into one gigantic frame, proportioned, harmonised, organised, almost unending in its activity, yet close knit into almost living unity. It seemed to be a system so complete in all its functions, and so perfect in its action as to be able to defy the Ages as it had conquered the Nations. What assault of strength, what attack of skill, what intrigue of talent, what tooth of time could conquer it! Its doom came not from without, but from within. That unconquerable Republic died in the grasp of the Caesar. The colossal frame, with its perfect symmetry and accurate adjustment, still remained, but it had become evolved into a machine whose scientific and pitiless power obeyed the absolute touch of a despot-driver, Diocletian. There are many names which have defiled the pages of history with stain of horror and slime of shame, but there are few as ghastly in their cruelty or as foul in their infamy as the name of the Emperor Diocletian. He is a type of what human nature can become when the most brutish passions and the most devilish vices of human society have

been developed, pampered, petted, tutored, systematised, concentrated by the cunning and malice of Satan into scientific paganism. In the Roman Empire of those days there was, on the one hand, all the outward splendour of power and of wealth, all the outward stability of law and of administration, all the outward excellence of literature and of art. But, on the other hand, all this was at the service of moral depravity. The very Religion of Rome was a positive approbation of vice, a formal enthronement of wicked gods and wanton goddesses upon the highest seats of Heaven. The worship of Saturn, or of Bacchus, or of Venus was publicly celebrated by such scenes of shame as could not be brought for trial before our Courts of Justice unless with closed doors. The historian Tacitus, although himself a Roman citizen and a Pagan, tells us that the city of the Caesars 'was a putrid reservoir whither flowed all the moral filth of the Provinces and from whence they each drew back their share.' In the words of Renan, 'It was a very Hell.'

But, behold! athwart the dark idolatry and brooding superstition of that weird pagan night there came the clear calm dawn of a new day. Into that world of fiendish cruelty or of grovelling despair, of glutton plethora or corpse-like want, of maniac whim or of diseased desire, of swine-like wallowings or of sloth-like repose, of every vice under Heaven and of every virulence flung up from Hell, there came a little band of pilgrims, Angels in spirit yet in body, human, [around whose presence glowed the sunshine of a divine truth, from whose faces was reflected the gladness of a divine hope, and from

whose lips was breathed the ecstatic message of a divine love. But they were poor, uneducated, without the recommendation of talent or the attractiveness of art, without the support of strength, without the aid of wealth, without the influence of diplomacy, without the patronage of rank. They were under the leadership of an aged and ignorant fisherman, who had spent his life in struggling to earn his daily bread from the waters of the Galilean Sea, who now called himself Peter and had forsaken his net and his boat in order to come to teach a new Religion to Rome. Rome smiled in amused scorn or laughed outright in contemptuous ridicule. That was not all. Peter proclaimed that he had come with a mission from God, that this God was the one and only true God, Creator, Lord, and Judge of Angels and of men ; that the gods and goddesses were but a mythical incarnation of demons or a practical personification of vice ; that the worship of their temples, the incantations of their priests, and the licentiousness of their votaries were an offence against Reason and a crime against Heaven. Yea ! Peter proclaimed that Rome must adore a God who had been born the human Babe of a Virgin, and had died a felon's death upon a Cross ; that Rome must become pure, meek, humble, forgiving, a father to the poor, a mother to the fallen, a sister to the sorrowful, a brother to the slave. What ! is there still more ? Yes ! much more. Peter proclaims that he has come to found a Kingdom, a spiritual Kingdom indeed, yet a Kingdom that shall surpass in space and outlast in time the Empire of the Caesar, a Kingdom that shall clasp all the nations and all the ages into

the brotherhood of one Faith, one Hope, one Love, under the one King Christ whose Sceptre Peter holds. Rome's amused smile changes to savage anger, and her laughter dies away in mysterious dread mingled with rancorous hatred. The Empire of Rome declares war against Peter. All the forces of the pagan world are concentrated in appalling onslaught against the very name of Christian. That war of earth and Hell against Heaven had begun under the Emperor Nero. It has reached its climax under the Emperor Diocletian.

In Diocletian's palace, near to his very person, there was an officer who must have been of supreme military merit, and of supreme military devotedness, for he held the most important and the most trusted post which a soldier could hold in the armies of the Empire. He was Captain of the Praetorian Guard. The Praetorian Guard was in some ways like our Guards, for its duty was to protect the person of the Sovereign. In many ways it was unlike: it was not mainly ornamental, nor was it under any authority except the Sovereign's will alone. It was drawn from the best soldiers of the best manhood, of the best training, of the best courage, of the best fighting fierceness, and of the best death-daring fidelity which could be chosen from the choicest legions of Rome. It was a comparatively small, but as absolutely perfect a military force as could be made of men. In its history it had made and unmade Emperors. Diocletian's Captain of the Guard was Sebastian. Sebastian's merit, his loyalty, his honour, were above reproach, above and beyond the very faintest suspicion of weakness or of blemish. But in those days there

was a word which, even when whispered, could change favour into fear, confidence into distrust, friendship into cruelty, love into hate. It was rumoured that Sebastian was a Christian. Arrested and accused before the Emperor, Sebastian, the frank and fearless soldier, avowed his Faith in Christ. Diocletian, cat-like in cruel sport with death, tigerlike in savage thirst for blood, condemned Sebastian to be shot to death with arrows. Back the strong bow bent between the grip of stronger hands. Shrilly the cord whistled as it was let loose. Swiftly the winged shaft shot out into the air ; gracefully it poised its rapid flight ; sharply its iron point pierced the human flesh ; deeply it dug its way down into that human body ; hotly it blushed with crimson shame as the life-blood wept upon it. There it remained fixed, fast, red. Arrow after arrow sped and flew and smote and stuck. As each shaft struck the body, the body of the soldier shivered, but the spirit of the soldier was serene, staunch, unconquered. At last the body fell motionless, cold, covered with the feather-tipped trophies of the victory of the Soldier-Saint. Away the soldiers marched. The body of their victim lay there alone, left as dead. But when some Christians crept through the night shadows to honour the Martyr's body with reverential burial, they found that Sebastian was still alive. Soon after his recovery, the fearless and frank soldier stood near the palace gate and confronted the Emperor, rebuking him for his cruelty towards the innocent Christians. Diocletian, savage with fresh fury, condemned Sebastian to be beaten to death with clubs. The brutal order was brutally obeyed, and the Soldier-Saint Sebastian was a Martyr.

Look now upon our own days in England ! The pendulum of power has indeed swung wildly from one extreme to the extreme opposed, from the extreme of Imperial despotism to the extreme of Democratic supremacy. The sceptre of the monarchy of old England has become subservient to the sway of the people's vote. Now, were a Democracy to obey the dictates of right Reason in which is imprinted and by which is promulgated the Law of Nature's Lord, were it to understand that 'the nation which will not serve God shall perish,' were it to recognise that the rights of man are prior to and independent of the rights of the Nation, and that therefore, while it may limit from vicious extreme or modify unto nobler use, it cannot destroy the fundamental rights of the citizen to personal freedom, to personal ownership, to personal initiative, to the fruits of his own toil or talent, to the lordship of his own home and to the fathership of his own children, it would indeed be a Commonwealth whose strength would be not merely 'broad-based upon the people's will,' but its authority would also be rightly revered and wisely guided by the people's mind. But were a Democracy to recognise no higher law than the whim of the mere multitude, were it to submit to the dictatorship of demagogues defiant of Religion and assailants of all right save the tyranny of Majorities, were it to enslave the person and plunder the property of the citizen, were it to allow no power to limit the licence or control the rapacity of the mere mob, were it to be a Republic only in name upon whose absolute throne should sit the most daring desperado of the day or the most popular intriguer, who for the moment



should pull, for his own profit, the wires that control the ignorant and criminal classes, its civilisation would soon degenerate into a softness whose feeble authority would quickly disintegrate into anarchy; then the strong iron action of the pagan machine of old Rome would be replaced in our twentieth century by the blind and disastrous movement of a socialistic mass.

By the brink of the bare and desolate bog I stood alone. Far out before me, the bleak and sterile surface stretched out, in monotonous sameness and uninteresting deformity, out into the evening winter air. There had been much heavy, constant rain, and the higher spots were soaking with recent moisture, while pools of water lurked everywhere in the hollows. The sky was now absolutely clear of cloud—one vast, faint expanse of arching canopy. But as the setting sun slowly fell nearer to the horizon, a strange splendour flushed over the whole heavens. The huge, round, sharp, red circle of the sun glowed with fierce majesty, lighting all the lower infinite depths behind it with pale gold which faded imperceptibly above into quaint slight shade of green, and, towards the eastern heights, deepened into solemn purple. As the red day-star touched the horizon, the edge of earth became like liquid gold, all the flat, dull-brown table-land of turf was changed to rich molten crimson, while the scattered crests of sod or herbage glittered like waves with scarlet spray, and the rain-pools flashed back the gold-red smile of the sun's good night. One moment—it seemed so sudden—the sun was gone. A slight flush lingered for an instant over the bog, and a slight gleam lingered in the western sky. Was it a dream, or

was it some grotesque vision of fairy-land? Was the earth still solid or was it the heavens that seemed to totter? No! no! the bog was moving. In the ghastly still twilight, in the gruesome silence, with quickening speed and appalling consistency, the whole enormous mass of the bog moved on and away.

A most grave warning as to the actual evils which threaten the very foundations of civilised society was given by Pope Leo XIII., and has been reiterated by Pope Pius X. In his Encyclical on Labour, in 1891, Pope Leo XIII. wrote: 'It is not to be wondered at that the spirit of restless revolt which has gained such predominating influence over the nations of the world, should have passed beyond the arena of politics to assert itself in the domain of social economy. . . . The momentous seriousness of the coming crisis fills every thoughtful mind with anxiety and dread.' Again, ten years later, in 1901, writing on Christian Democracy, Pope Leo XIII. said: 'The disputes (on political and social economy) arise from the false philosophic theories and wrong ethical principles now commonly taught amongst the people. . . . Matters have been brought to such a pass by the struggle between capital and labour, fomented as it is by professional agitators, that the countries where these disputes most frequently take place, find themselves confronted by ruin and disaster. . . . It is an error to suppose that the social question is only an economic one. As a matter of fact, it is, above all, a question of morality and religion. Even though wages were multiplied, the hours of labour shortened, the means of support and comfort increased and cheapened, yet, if the workman hearkens to the teaching and follows

the practice of those who have no reverence for God and no regard for morality, his labour and his gains will bring him neither happiness nor comfort.' The great Pope continues: 'Social Democracy aims at giving all power exclusively to the proletariat, at reducing all ranks to the same level, at abolishing all class distinctions, and finally at introducing common ownership of goods. . . . Christian Democracy, by the very fact that it is Christian, must be based upon the principles of divine Faith in its endeavours for the betterment of the masses. Hence, to Christian Democracy, justice is sacred. It must maintain that the right of acquiring and possessing property cannot be gainsaid, and it must safeguard the various distinctions and degrees which are indispensable in every well-ordered commonwealth. It is clear, therefore, that there is nothing in common between Social and Christian Democracy. They differ from each other as much as the sect of Socialism differs from the Church of Christ.' Listen to the present Pope, Pius X.: 'Socialism, breathing hatred of Christianity, advances with ruin in its train—blotting out the hope of Heaven from the hearts of the people—to destroy the whole fabric of society.'

It is, alas! most true that the mass of our working classes has been permeated and undermined by socialist theories. Wild ideas of revolution and social upheaval have sapped the supports of solid principle and sturdy right. Loosened from its once firm reverence for Religion, and unrestrained by any sense of authority other than the obedience of its rulers to its own impulse, the socialistic mass has now left within it no moral power to hold back, or to stem, or to guide, or to control

the mere material swing of its social gravitation, so that it must incline, by its own very weight, to move abruptly, fearfully, fatally, in torrent of force and avalanche of fury away downward unto devastation and disaster. Meanwhile, the minds of our workers are being dazzled and deluded with fairy-like pictures and strange dreams of an impossible paradise. But all that huge glaring falsehood shall fade into a night of horror if once the social mass of men begins to move without the light of Truth, without the safeguard of Religion, onward and downward unto death. Surely ! surely ! the warning of the Vicar of Christ should make men think and tremble. Surely ! surely ! some great, strong moral power must intervene to stay the wild swing of atheist and vicious tendencies throughout the width and depth of the social world. Surely ! surely ! as Leo XIII. points out, the only but efficacious remedy for the evils of our times is in the triumph of Christian Democracy.

O Spirit of Saint Sebastian, Soldier and Martyr ! surely we have sore need of thy patience and of thy courage ! Is there no hope left ? Yes ! one hope, and only one : it is the Church of Christ. No philosopher who was led by the mere light of Reason has escaped falling into abysmal error. No State based upon the principles of mere Reason but has oscillated between revolution and despotism, between tyranny and anarchy. Revelation is 'the one and only guiding-star of Reason.' We Catholics need not fear. 'Fear not little flock.' We may have to face in the future a physical persecution as bitter as the cruelty of Diocletian. We may have now to face a moral persecution as bitter as the sneer of the cynic or the gibe of

the sensualist. We need the patience of Martyrs. We also need the courage of Soldiers. Fearlessly and defiantly we must challenge the social errors which menace our country with ruin. Fearlessly and defiantly we must trample on the human respect which would slink away from the profession of Catholic principle. Fearlessly and defiantly we must condemn what is insidious and sensuous in conduct. Fearlessly and defiantly we must combat what is open and aggressive in vice. 'Fear not little flock.' The Church of Christ, which has victoriously survived the tempest of paganism, will victoriously stem the tide of the moving mass of Socialism. That Church of Christ, through the ever-varying and always hostile ages of the past, has been the same divinely blessed Spouse of Christ. She will still be, amidst the seductions of peace or amidst the horrors of war in the future, the same pure and unconquered Queen.

May 'our lot be with the Saints,' may we be faithful and devoted children of our Mother Church, with the blessing of God, through the prayer of His dear Mother Mary, of his holy Apostles, and of Saint Sebastian, Soldier and Martyr. 'Fear not little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a Kingdom.'

## CHAPTER XXII

### *CENTENARY OF CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE : 1814-1914*<sup>1</sup>

*I will go in to the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth.—*  
Psalm xlii. 3, 4.

NOT one gentle touch of the South wind, not one rough buffeting from the boisterous North ; not one strident wave of noise from the city street, not one little ripple of sound that comes over the lonely field ; not one glad ray of colour that flashes from flower or sun, not one dull gleam of monotonous hue that is reflected from stone or clay, but bears an impression, however faint or unknown, that calls forth a kindred response from the sensitive chords of the soul. All these outward impressions of Nature combine into one definite influence of spot, of scene, and of surroundings that reacts upon our human life. Over some this influence will be intense ; over others feeble ; but, however unconscious we may be of its action, this definite influence is always there. Much more will the intelligent music of the human voice or the mysterious magnetism of the human face, and, still more, will the revelation of the human brain or the fascination of the human heart create

<sup>1</sup> Sermon preached at Clongowes, on Whit-Sunday, May 31, 1914.

impressions that transcend the material powers of Nature ; for they are only bounded by the Spirit, and the Spirit knows no barrier in time or space. When these influences of the moral world come upon the soul in the days of its impressionable yet unimpressed boyhood, they write their meaning on it, as upon a virgin page, in characters that are clear and indelible. They are first, and therefore definite ; they are formative, and therefore final.

The impressions of sight, sound, fragrance, touch, and the impressions of thought, fancy, feeling, will ; the impressions of the outward world of Nature, and the impressions of the moral world within, are received within the same character, and are stored up within the same treasury of the soul. There, they are ranged and ordered in unity of time or of place, in symmetry of kind or of degree, in kinship of likeness or in contrast of sort, so as to make one strange, distinct, yet interdependent harmony of ideas. Thus, a sound may awaken the sister chord of the memory of its birth, and the spot where the word was spoken flashes back at once to the thought ; or the chance reading of a name may bring back to the soul ' the sight of a vanished face and the sound of a voice that is still.' This association of ideas vibrates with sympathetic spell upon our most tender and most tuneful heart-strings.

To one whose boyhood's gaze has rested for years upon these grand old castle walls, or passed across the playground to scan the distant mountains, or lingered with delight under the green roof of the woods, or watched in ecstasy the glory of the setting sun as it transfused with iridescent splendour the clouds above and the stately line of trees below ; to one whose ear

has caught the merry song of the birds in the pleasure-ground or the merry shout of the boys at play, or heard the gentle West wind sigh or the hardy North-easter hurtle round about the grim, grey towers, or started to answer the familiar tones of the bell as they called to work or to leisure, or hearkened in wonder beneath the majestic lime-trees of the avenue that uprose like the walls of some great Cathedral aisle while the murmur of innumerable bees chanted their unconscious hymn of praise to the great Artist of Nature, or paused to listen amid the tranquil silence of the study-hall or in the reverential hush of worship and awe in the old Chapel; to one who, in the summer time, has rapturously rested to enjoy the fresh, fragrant breeze under the shade of the weeping ash by the old 'Haw Haw,' or who, in the hardy frosty air of the winter, has flashed with delightful sense of speed and ecstatic music of motion over the sheer, smooth ice; to one whose mind has been won to wisdom by the cordial accents of a Master whose face and whose kindness are never forgot; to one whose heart has re-echoed responsive to the friendships of school that will last through his life, the very stones of Clongowes must be stored with cherished memories; the very spot where he sat as he learned his lesson, or the ground where he sported at football or cricket, the very alcove where he slept, or the very bench where he knelt in prayer must have hallowed recollections that endure, unclouded and unchilled, through all the tempests or trials of manhood; recollections that must remain, fresh and fragrant, amid the snows of age, to be brought with the soul when it passes away from earth to Heaven.

To me, whose boyhood has been spent within these



beloved walls, whither I returned in after years to be Master of a class which has given noble leaders to the Nation and holy Priests to God, whither I have often and often since come back with fresher fondness and deepening veneration; to me, to whom has been entrusted the privilege, the honour, the happiness of being your spokesman, on this hundredth anniversary of the birthday of our Alma Mater, it may be allowed to express, in the words of the Psalmist, the thought which is foremost in your minds to-day and the emotion which is dominant in your hearts, as they are first and deepest in the minds and hearts of our old school-fellows whose fancy and whose friendship turn back from distant places to thrill more quickly and to throb more warmly in unison with our own on this great festival of our dear old college of Clongowes Wood. 'I will go in to the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth.'

We will think first about the dear old Spot itself. We will then think about the breathing Spirit which has given to Clongowes its personal and characteristic life.

This dear old spot was once the abode of gallant soldier and fair dame. Round about the English Pale a chain of strongholds had been set to ward off their Irish enemy. One of these was Clongowes Castle. Remnants of the borderland between the supremacy of the Protestant Saxon in Dublin and the slavery of the Catholic Kelt in Ireland still remain in the ramparts which stretch on the one side towards Rathcoffey and on the other side towards Clane. The Castle was first built by the Viscount of Baltinglass, the head of the Eustace family. It has appeared in history during the reign of Henry VI. and often during the reign of

Elizabeth. In 1677 it passed into the hands of the Brownes, a Catholic family of Dublin, a sign of changing times. The Brownes called it Castle Browne. The Browne family won an honour in battle which up to our own day they still hold. One Browne was Field-Marshal of the French Empire. The Castle was rebuilt in 1718 by Stephen Fitzwilliam Browne. In 1788 it was enlarged and embellished by Thomas Wogan Browne. In 1810 it passed to General Michael Wogan Browne who commanded a division of the Saxon army in Napoleon's march on Moscow. This gallant soldier preferred exile abroad as an honoured officer to a serf's life at home as a despised Irish Papist. He sold the Castle to the Order of the Jesuits, who gave it back its old name of Clongowes Wood.

Meanwhile, Providence was preparing a change from afar. The Soldier-Saint Loyola, called by God to defend His Church against the apostate Luther, had sent his great lieutenant, Saint Francis Xavier, to conquer India. He sent another of his first companions, Father Paschaisius Brouet, in 1542, to invade the Protestant domination in Ireland. But, in history, the Heathen has often been more docile to Revelation than the Heretic. Still, soon the Jesuits had thirteen houses in Ireland. It is an interesting historical fact that all the Irish Jesuits of the old Society were professed Fathers and had been abroad as Professors of theology, philosophy, or rhetoric. But the doom of death came through the hand of a Father. Pope Clement XIV., in 1773, yielding to overpowering political pressure on the part of the Bourbons, suppressed the Jesuits. The Irish Jesuit Fathers in Ireland had, at the time of the suppression, some little capital. This,

although they were scattered about without a home, they did not spend, but they carefully watched over it, and guarded it, and increased it, in the hope that one day the Society of Jesus might be raised from the tomb and that their hoardings would enable them to establish a college for the Catholic Kelts of Ireland. That money bought Clongowes Wood. When the rumour was wafted about, Sir Robert Peel, then Chief Secretary of Ireland, summoned Father Peter Kenny, the first Rector of Clongowes, to appear before him. The answer of Father Peter Kenny to the contemptuous challenge of the official spokesman of Protestant bigotry was so frank yet so prudent, so courteous yet so fearless, that the great statesman bowed and held his peace. The year 1814, which saw the restoration of the Society of Jesus, also beheld the opening of the College of Clongowes Wood. This fearless action was taken, on the advice of Daniel O'Connell and through the help of William Parnell of Avondale, at a time when 'the law of the land did not so much as presume that a Papist breathed the air of Ireland.'

The massive soaring towers and the stern sturdy walls, round which the forces of war had often surged, the noble rooms, where once the favourites of fashion had danced, had become the home of merry lad and black-robed Jesuit. In the words of Thomas Francis Meagher, 'the foliage by the paths of the pleasure-ground, which was once brushed by the brocade of the fine lady, is now swept by the serge of the sons of Ignatius.' Four young, but most brilliant, Masters formed the teaching staff. The oldest amongst them, Father Kenny, the Rector, was only thirty-five. These great Masters created great scholars. The tide of

numbers mounted rapidly. In the first year there were 110 boys, two years later 200, and after another two years 220. It is not easy to realise to-day the multitude or the magnitude of the difficulties to be then encountered by a Catholic college. Continued and wholesale confiscations had practically reduced the Catholic gentry to penury, while those troubled times of revolutions—financial, social, and political—were little suited to foster education. Hence the financial life of Clongowes has been but feeble. Speaking broadly, the Catholics in this country were too poor to be able to pay a pension much in excess of the mere sustenance of their sons, and very often, owing to misfortune, or improvidence, or other accident, that meagre pension was not paid. This will explain why it is that even now the buildings of the college are not all that we should desire. At the same time, Lord Fitzgibbon, a most intelligent and most impartial observer, said, some few years ago, ‘Clongowes is the best-equipped school in Ireland.’ The study-hall and refectory were built in 1819. In 1886 they were burned down, but, owing in great measure to the generosity of old Clongownians, they were more magnificently restored. The old Chapel was built in the same year as the study-hall. The year 1886 brought the most fortunate epoch in the life of Clongowes since its birth. It was the year of the amalgamation of Tullabeg with Clongowes. The rival forces of the two colleges were fused into friendship; the numbers, united in one college, effected a most desirable economy; even the games received a new impulse of energy; but, above all, the studious ardour of the college was intensified to a degree unknown since its earlier days.

It were but scant knowledge of a school to know no more than its dead walls, or its equipment, or its libraries, or its museums, or even the diplomas of its professors or the names and number of its students. 'Not ample breadth of lands nor noble buildings, but men alone' make what is great. The greatness of a college does not consist in the splendour of its architecture, nor in the taste of its adornment, nor in the learned treasures stored up on its book-shelves, nor in the rare erudition concentrated in its teachers, nor in the titles or talents of its scholars. The true greatness of a college consists in those special traits and personal characteristics which constitute its own ideal life and make of it a fount of true wisdom, the mother of noble sons. We will dwell awhile on those marked features, those emphatic characteristics, which make of Clongowes, amongst all other colleges the whole wide world over, what it has been and what it is to our knowledge and to our love—that is to say, itself, Clongowes Wood. We may group these characteristics broadly under three ideas, broadly typical of its sons. The Clongownian is a Gentleman, a Scholar, a Catholic.

You will remark that I do not claim any exclusive ownership of these high prerogatives, as against other schools, for those who have been breathed upon and nurtured by the spirit of Clongowes. What I do claim, and what you not only admit but also claim, is that amongst Clongowes boys the true ideal of a gentleman has been, broadly speaking, so well understood, so reverently appreciated, and so thoroughly realised as to strike even strangers with the evidence of its worth. It has been always shown, as these things are only shown, in a certain undefined yet distinct, moral yet

marked, general yet essential, refinement, not merely of manner but of feeling, not merely of politeness but of thoughtful courtesy. It is also shown in that rare intimacy of genial intercourse, in that delicate interchange of cordial friendship which has always existed between the Clongowes Masters and their boys. Otherwhere there may or may not be respect or esteem ; there may or may not be admiration or gratitude. Nowhere have there been such bonds of home to bind together and for ever the hearts, not of some nor of many, but of all the dear young boys and their dear old Masters, into the college life of Clongowes Wood. Nor has this feeling been without its charmed results of happiness. One utterance in after life of an old Clongownian finds a ready echo in our hearts : ' I never felt so free as at Clongowes.' This chivalrous loyalty and enduring devotedness of its past students have been put into words by one of the greatest amongst them all, the brightest luminary of the Bar and Bench in Ireland or even England, who said : ' I have feelings of deep affection and gratitude to the old college where I spent so many happy years, and to which I owe my all. Anything that I am, anything that I have, I can owe to Clongowes.' These same sentiments were expressed at a public banquet in London by the greatest living leader and orator of Ireland. Another sentiment, expressed on his death-bed by one of the earliest Masters of Clongowes, Father Butler, will win the answer of our sympathy : ' I shall see Clongowes no more.'

Allow me again to fix your attention upon this fact that I fling no blame and make no attack, as I bear no malice against other colleges, when I speak of the characteristics of the Clongownian as a scholar.

I am not speaking of what others are or are not : I am speaking of what he is. There are very few amongst us now whose memory can reach back to the actual days of the golden age of classic literature in Clongowes. It was not of the mere keen, cold type of scientific surgery, nor of the dreary, heartless kind of the philological pedant. No! it was a vivid, enthusiastic appreciation, a most intense enjoyment, it was an absorbing, intellectual love of the most perfect models of refinement, taste, delicacy, power, beauty in the moulding and expressing of human thought in prose and poetry as they have been given to us in the most perfect languages of classic lore. All this is proved by its magnificent results. We will quote some few instances. The Latin and Greek poems of Father Joseph Lentaigne, written when he was a boy, are still treasured at Clongowes. Alexander McCarthy, afterwards M.P. for Cork, was celebrated for his Latin composition. The Latin poems of Jeremiah D. Murphy were welcomed to a place in *Blackwood's Magazine* long before the young author died at the early age of eighteen. There was another Jeremiah Murphy, whose marvellous skill and rapidity in composing Greek verse became a tradition in Trinity College. Pre-eminent above them all looms the figure of Frank Mahony, known to history as Father Prout, who showed his love for the classics as a father shows his love for his children by playing with them. That marvellous *tour de force*, the polyglot version of 'The Groves of Blarney,' is his unquestioned title to a conspicuous niche in the temple of classic literature. At the same time it is to be remembered that the Greek version was written by a schoolfellow of his

at Clongowes, Frank Stack Murphy, afterwards Serjeant Murphy of the English Bar. On the Academy Day, in early years, the Duke of Leinster, 'the old Duke' as he is still called by the old folk of the country, usually presided. When examined before a Parliamentary committee, he said: 'It is the most curious establishment I ever saw, the boys are well brought up; there is a public examination every year, and Fellows of Trinity College are invited to go down; the Fellows are given a list of what classics they are to examine them in, and the answering is wonderful.' Frequent examiners on these occasions were also the famous Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare, and Valentine, second Lord Cloncurry, who more than once defended Clongowes by his pen against bigoted and perverse criticism. This love of the classics was so genuine that they were often the matter of delightful chats amongst the boys on their long country walks. The course of authors who, in poetry and rhetoric, were read with appreciation, taste, judgment, and consequent mental culture, was so extensive that it would astonish a modern student who is hustled along in the hurry and turmoil of the competitive examination; while, on the other hand, it is undeniable that the Intermediate system has stimulated hard work all round to a degree which was undreamt of in the old dilettante days of studious leisure. The classics did not oust mathematics, to which one hour each day was given—far more than in the English public schools. Nor was physical science overlooked, as those will well remember who had the advantage of attending the lectures given during a long series of years by Father Edward Kernan.



French was another characteristic study of the college. Practically all those who were Masters during all the school life of Clongowes had passed their years of study in Belgium or in France, and of their rich harvest their scholars gathered rich store; so that their knowledge of French was unequalled by most colleges of Europe or America, surpassed by none.

To strangers it may seem surprising that I should claim for Clongowes a unique pre-eminence in English; to our scholars or to those who have been familiar with their work this will be no matter for wonder. Ireland is admitted by all other peoples to be a nation of orators. In pulpit eloquence indeed France holds the palm; but in political or forensic eloquence we have a galaxy of talent and of triumph which is unrivalled. For true oratory it is not enough to have mere accuracy of diction, or mere elegance of style, or mere lucidity of thought, or mere depth of feeling, or mere energy of purpose, but, to make an orator, all these must be combined, heightened, intensified, harmonised. Now, in the Irish Kelt all nations recognise a quick and deep intuition, a masterful grasp of synthesis, a keen and sparkling wit, a poetic vividness and warm colouring of fancy, a full, fresh power of sympathy, 'the sense of tears in moral things,' an instinctive perception of rhythm in the flow of phrase, an inborn love of harmony in word-music, and, above all, the power of being attracted, penetrated, enraptured by the prophetic inspiration of a noble idea, and of being thrilled, dominated, absorbed in enthusiastic, yet controlled, emotion by the vocation of a noble cause, a power majestic, uplifting, overwhelming as the tidal throb of the heart of the Ocean.

Those are the gifts of an orator. Yet all these gifts, however great, however needed, are not enough. 'Poeta nascitur ; orator fit.' The poet is born ; the orator is made. To the unpolished gems of nature must be given the cultured finish of artistic touch. Such training has been supplied at Clongowes by means which are as unusual as they are potent in their efficacy. Broadly, these means refer to the culture of thought and fancy, as beyond mere education ; and to the moulding of actual oratorical expression, as above mere speech. These means are the boys' reading-room and the boys' debating society. From the beginning there had been a circulating library by which the boys were well provided with books suited to their taste, their improvement, and their years, but, under the Rectorship of Father Haly—a brilliant period in the life of this college—a splendid reading-room was opened. Its object is well described on the mural tablet which still remains, 'for the spending of their leisure hours pleasantly, and with literary profit, this hall has been devoted to the boys by the college.' This library was well stocked with books of history, biography, travel, with a complete selection of the best authors in poetry and prose, the speeches of great orators, and light literature of a healthy and interesting sort and very complete in its wise and wide selection. It gave at once, and has ever since continued to give, a strong and steady impulse towards the study of English literature. The opening of the library, long years before anything of the kind had been even dreamt of in any other college in the whole world, led to the establishment of what has been ever since a characteristic feature of Clongowes school life—the Academical

Debating Society. This was founded by two great men : one a young Master, Mr. Frank Murphy, the other a young scholar, Thomas Francis Meagher. Fr. Frank Murphy, who died afterwards, in a glorious green old age, in Australia, was then, as Mr. Frank Murphy, teaching at Clongowes. He had been a boy at Clongowes. He was nephew of the great Dr. Murphy, Bishop of Cork, and first cousin to Serjeant Murphy of the English Bar. He was an enthusiastic and thorough student of English literature. His boy-lieutenant became afterwards known to history as General Thomas Francis Meagher of the United States. Of him Mr. Lecky wrote : 'He was possessed of eloquence beyond comparison superior to that of any other rising speaker in the country.' Twice O'Connell spoke with enthusiastic praise and warm encouragement at the boys' debate. Since then, through the long years which have elapsed, the line of young speakers, winners of the gold medal of the debate, has formed an unbroken chain of links made up of orators worthy of golden laurels.

The Intermediate Education system, in 1879, brought a complete change in the spirit of our dream. As I have already said, with the infusion of new blood, new aims, and new energy from Tullabeg, Clongowes took its legitimate place at the forefront. The pre-eminent place which Clongowes has held in the Intermediate examinations is due, in greatest measure, to the organising genius and enthusiastic zeal of one who is still, thank God ! as energetic as ever at his post, who, for over a quarter of a century, has steered the course of its studies unto constant and magnificent success. We cannot linger over the statistics of our

success. I only quote some sentences from the speech of the late Sir Peter O'Brien, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. At the first meeting of the Clongowes Union, in November 1897, he said: 'The success of Clongowes was brilliant and striking. For instance, during one period of seven years, Clongowes has won the first place in all Ireland no less than five times, while during the twenty years of the Intermediate,' up to the time Sir Peter O'Brien spoke, 'no other college, Catholic or Protestant, has held the same position more than twice. Again, from '87 to '97, Clongowes, with one-sixtieth of the total number of boys presented, Clongowes won 3590 honours in various subjects, including many distinctions such as 29 gold medals, with scores of exhibitions, prizes, first places. That is a record absolutely phenomenal.'

We now come to speak of the Clongownian as a Catholic. You, old Clongownians, within whose memory will to-day be sadly yet fondly thrilling the old verse of the old Clongowes song of William Nugent Scully—

Blest fountain of Religion and of Truth,  
I thank my God 'twas here I spent my youth,

will well remember the enthusiasm of the Catechism prize, the meditation before daily Mass, the frequent sermons, the sacred prayerfulness of the very atmosphere of the old Chapel, the six Sundays of Saint Aloysius, the hallowed delight of the month of Mary, the chivalrous honour of Her sodality, nor can you ever forget the reverential yet loving awe with which in our beds at night in the old dormitories we answered our Prefect's *De Profundis* when all was dark. That

twice-blessed breathing of the spirit of Clongowes touched and tutored not merely the boys, but also great men who knelt in prayer before the Altar where God giveth joy to my youth. Before that Altar, during the Repeal years, the boys beheld the great figure of the great Liberator, wrapt in his frieze coat, bowed down in adoration. Each one of those years O'Connell came to make a retreat at Clongowes in simple prayer and quiet thought. Yea! this spot had such endearing influence upon him that he had hoped to spend his last years here in prayerfulness and peace. Mr. Gladstone, in an article on O'Connell, spoke of a touching passage in one of the Liberator's letters: 'I think of giving up my income, save an annuity of a small sum, and of going, if I am received, to Clongowes to spend the rest of my life there. I want a period of retreat to think of nothing but eternity.'

It is not always possible for a college to undo the harm that is sometimes done by evil influences in the boy's own home; nor is it always possible for a college to forestall and defeat the difficulties and dangers with which a man must meet when his life has been launched forth on the deep sea. This is true even of the boys who are brought up within the staid cloisters of a seminary to become candidates for the Church. It must be more true of boys whose destiny it is, as members of a profession or as business men, or as holders of important positions at home or abroad, or as men of independent means, to have to face the storms and the seductions of the worldly world, and to breathe a mental and moral atmosphere more adverse to Faith and more enervating to

character. Unfair criticism may be sharpened and pointed against any college, because, forsooth, some few of its past pupils may not have been as faithful to its teaching and traditions as they might have been had their childhood been sheltered under a spiritual conservatory and their manhood spent within the precincts of a pious Paradise. Such criticism Clongowes need not fear. Our answer to all this is, '*Circumspice!*' Behold this meeting here! Think of all that it means and of all that it represents! It is one voice gathered of all the echoes of a hundred years resounding with the heart-beat of all within this Church, reverberating with the heart-beat of all the sons of Clongowes who, in distant lands the wide world over, are now with us one mind, one love, one voice, proclaiming our fidelity to our Faith, our allegiance to our Church, our proud loyalty and fond affection for Clongowes Wood.

The glory of Clongowes is in the triumph of her sons. This is not the place to mention names, nor, even were the place and praise appropriate, could I enumerate them all. We have, during the past hundred years, a brilliant and unbroken line of noble ancestors. Through all that time this college has never failed to give many of her most gifted students to fill the ranks of the soldier sons of the Soldier-Saint Loyola. Many of them have been admired for their scholarship, loved for their kindness, and revered for their holiness. Other sons, in other paths of life, have climbed to the highest peaks of honour. At the Bar and on the Bench their success has been phenomenal. Lord Chancellors, Lords Chief Justice, Lord Chief Baron, Masters of the Rolls, County Court

Judges, and countless historic names at the Irish and English Bar are high tribute to the honour of Clongowes. In medicine we have physicians and surgeons, whose talent has been recognised not merely in Ireland but abroad, and amongst them many who have been chosen by the King to receive the titles which they have so well deserved. In business and commerce we have such positions as Governor of the Bank of Ireland, Chairman of Chambers of Commerce and other Boards of wide influence and mercantile importance, Chairman and Commissioners of the various systems of education, Secretary of the Royal University, Registrar of the National University, Newman's successor in the Rectorship of the Catholic University. In the Diplomatic and Civil Services we have a Lieutenant-Governor of India, the blue ribbon of the Indian Civil Service, another blue ribbon in the English Civil Service, and one of the most distinguished Ambassadors of the British Empire. In the Colonies or in foreign nations, we have a Minister of Justice in Newfoundland, a United States representative in Munich. In the army we have a glorious record of heroes: amongst them Thomas Esmonde, known as Esmonde of the Redan, one of the first to receive the Victoria Cross; Theobald Bellew, who died, a Captain of the Royal Irish Rifles, in the trenches before Sebastopol; William Mansfield, killed at the assault on the Redan; James Cleary, one of the gallant band of officers who fell in the defence of Lucknow; and Theobald McKenna, who escaped in the Crimean War only to fall a few years later in the Chinese campaign. One Clongownian passed through the dangers of war in three continents, Major General Henry Butler.

We have also the late Sir William Butler. Of the valour of her sons in the Crimea, in the far East, and in the far West we need say no more. In the South African War we had a score of officers ranging from the young Lieutenant to a veteran General of a division. This is but a brief, scant, and incomplete record of some of our great men. Wherefore, we Clongownians did not wonder at the intense enthusiasm manifested at the first meeting of the Clongowes Union. From the President Patriarch of ninety summers to the youth who had just left school, we had present there representatives of eight decades of the past century. We were proud of our College, and we knew that our College was proud of us. But upon strangers this extraordinary enthusiasm came as a revelation. They could not know what Clongowes had been to us, nor could they know what we feel for Clongowes. I quote some words of an old Clongownian, the late Lord Justice O'Brien: 'Wherever the fortune of those may be cast who have been educated by the Jesuits, whether their lives be records of failure or of success, one sentiment I am convinced is common to them all—a deep affection, a deep sense of reverence for the instructors of their youth. For my own part, in my early life I loved the Jesuits, and now, when the shadows are beginning to lengthen upon my path, that sentiment knows no change.'

Behold the dawn of a new era lights up the horizon of the century which is to come! We sons of Clongowes and Tullabeg have powers that are strong as the temper of steel, sturdy as the heart of oak, staunch as granite grit; we have talents more precious than pearls that were fished from the sea, more rich than



gold that was dug from the earth, more brilliant than diamond that flashes back its smile to the sun ; we have opportunities that reach over the mountains and beyond the seas, that spread across continents and follow the sun as it sinks over the great Republic of the West ; but they stop not there in their nightless day, for they travel far off to the East to return again in their triumphant march to the green shores of the dear old land that we love. Such men, such powers, such opportunities ! ' Noblesse oblige.' For the honour of Clongowes, forward towards the great future.

Yet one brief moment, pause to bid the past good-bye. O memories ! dear as the clasped hand of friendship, sad as the first tear that falls upon an open grave ; sweet as the echo of a beloved voice, mournful as the wind that wails round the ruined remnants of a once happy home ! O memories ! cherished by boyhood and sacred unto old age ! Memories of the empty gaps in the old brigade ! Memories of our dear dead ! Yet they are not mere memories. They live in their actual influence, in their enduring support, they live in their breathing spirit. Clongowes, I love thee still ! O Spirits of our dead of Tullabeg and Clongowes ! You whose bodies sleep beneath the fresh green grass of our own beloved land of the Western seas, and you whose bones are buried in exile afar, come back ! Come back to us ! Spirits of our dear dead, and mingle your thanksgiving, your joy, your petition, your prayer with ours who still tread this pilgrim path of earth.

O God, who giveth a joy to our youth, as sparkling and dear in the twilight of life as it was in the day of

its dawn. O great God who dost mightily rule the tempest or calm of the tumultuous tides of the world. O gentle Christ who dost always lovingly hear the loving prayer of Thy Mother, Thy Mother who won at Clongowes the love of our boyhood and who still guards the love of our age, hear this our prayer through her prayer that we, sons of this hallowed and fond home of Faith, of holiness, of learning, and of character, be such worthy sons of such noble inheritance, that, whatever fortune may befall, whatever path our steps may tread, whatever span of shortened summers or length of patriarchal years may end our exile ; whether we rise up to thank Thee for our abundance or bend down in patience under trial, whether our brows be circled with the honours of the world or we drudge unknown in fruitless fields, whether pleasant flowers strew our way and kind friends share our fondest hopes, or whether we shudder in the pain that shatters health or writhe in the anguish that breaks the heart ; even though strange weird revolutions should uproot the civilisation of these tottering times, even though new wild ideas should convulse all creeds outside the Church, even though grotesque or demon shapes of sin should strut in triumph across the earth, even though social earthquakes should shake our empires into dust, even though moral volcanoes should bury our Republics under ashes ; yet we, and those who will hereafter be heirs to our traditions, may exercise an influence that shall not be bounded by the barriers of space nor outstripped by the steps of time, but shall remain true to the Faith of our Fathers, steadfast in allegiance to Christ's Church, staunch in devotedness to our country, pure in most absolute honour, serene in most absolute

innocence, an influence that shall spread like fragrant breath of healthful shrub to carry blessed germs of good afar, an influence that shall never lose the angelic beauty of its sacred charm nor the healing balm of its human benevolence, nor ever fade from its earlier brightness, nor ever fail in the vigour of its youth during many and many a century to come, nor ever die until at last the last wave of the last century shall have spent its last ripple upon the everlasting shore.

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